00027564

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 16 January, 2016

301
27564
130
571

00027564

27564 aC

NATURAL HISTORY OF SOCIETY.

CHAPTER I.

EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION.

THE Holy Scriptures not only contain the best and most consistent account of the origin of civilization, but they furnish the most authentic description of the country in which civilization first made a remarkable advancement. The Books of Genesis and Exodus contain incidental notices of the condition of Egypt, by which we are enabled to estimate pretty accurately the progress of humanity at a remote age in the valley of the Nile; and these notices have recently derived unexpected confirmation from modern discoveries—for the monuments brought to light in Egypt confirm the accuracy of Scripture in every particular, and satisfactorily refute any counter-statements which had previously been allowed to rank as contradictory authorities. One remarkable instance of this new evidence for the accuracy of the Pentateuch, will serve fitly to introduce our examination of the Scriptural statements respecting the civilization of Egypt.

In the last century, the Books of Moses were often attacked, and their authenticity impugned, because they mention the existence of vineyards, grapes, and consequently of wine, in Egypt; for Herodotus expressly declares that there were no vineyards in Egypt, and

Plutarch avers that the natives of that country abhorred wine, as being the blood of those who rebelled against the gods. This authority appeared conclusive, not merely to the sceptics who impugned the veracity of the Pentateuch, but even to the learned Michaeles, who concluded that the use of wine was enjoined in the sacrifices for the purpose of making a broad distinction between the religious usages of the Israelites and of the Egyptians. The monuments opened by modern research have decided the controversy in favour of the Jewish legislator. In the subterranean vaults at Eilithyia every part of the processes connected with the dressing and tending of the vine are faithfully delineated;* the trellices on which the vines were trained, the care with which they were watered, the collection of the fruit, the treading of the wine-press, and the stowing of the wine in *amphoræ*, or vases, are there painted to the life; and additional processes of extracting the juice from the grape are represented, which seem to have been peculiar to the Egyptian people. Mr. Jomard adds, that the remains of amphoræ, or wine vessels, have been found in the ruins of old Egyptian cities, which are still encrusted with the tartar deposited by the wine.

It is not necessary to account for the error into which Herodotus has fallen; he wrote long after Egypt had been distracted by civil wars, and then subdued by the Persians; calamities quite sufficient to account for the disappearance of such a highly artificial cultivation as that of the vine must have been in Egypt. His statement is most probably correct, if it be limited to the period when Herodotus wrote; and thus viewed it

* See the Bible Illustrated by the Monuments of Egypt, p. 50.

becomes important evidence for the superior antiquity both of the Bible and the Egyptian monuments.

The land of Egypt was visited by Abraham about four hundred years after the Flood according to the computation of the present Hebrew text, or twelve hundred years according to the Septuagint. It had then an organized government, a king with the title of Pharaoh, a court, a nobility—"the princes of Pharaoh,"—and a system of domestic servitude; for we find male and female slaves enumerated among the presents bestowed by the Pharaoh upon Abraham. Females had greater freedom than they usually enjoyed in the East, or in Egypt itself at a later age; they were not confined to the harem, they were permitted to go about unveiled, and their personal charms were made the subject of conversation.

The next mention of Egypt is connected with the history of Joseph. He was sold to certain Midianites or Ishmaelites, who had established a regular caravan trade with Egypt, the articles of commerce being "spicery, and balm, and myrrh." The precious metals had become a medium of exchange before this time, for Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah with silver from the children of Heth; but the progress of commerce had probably introduced some mode of coining or stamping, by which the value of the bullion might be made known without the necessity of assaying and weighing it, for the price paid to Joseph's brethren was twenty *pieces* of silver. Joseph was sold by the merchants to Potiphar, "an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard, or chief of the executioners;" for the punishment of criminals in Eastern countries is

generally entrusted to the royal guards. Here, then, we have two additional proofs of progress—a regular foreign trade, and something like an established coinage.

Domestic slavery appears to have been very mild at this time in Egypt, for Joseph enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom; and that females were not yet deprived of their natural liberty is obvious from the history of Potiphar's wife. A more important element of civilization, however, is the existence of a legal system of imprisonment,—"Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound."

It may appear whimsical to point out a prison as a sign of improvement, but unquestionably the existence of a system of legal punishment is evidence of advancement, for it shews that the regular empire of public law has superseded the blind impulses of private revenge. In a less civilized country than Egypt then was, Potiphar would have slain or mutilated Joseph on the spot.

The reigning Pharaoh had a court and a royal establishment; for two of his officers, his cupbearer and the master of his household, were committed to the same prison as Joseph, and from their dreams it is evident that the arts of confectionery and of preparing grateful beverages had been at this time cultivated with success. Pharaoh's dreams add, that the Egyptians were acquainted with the artificial feeding of cattle, for it is said that the seven fat kine were fed on the *achú*, not "a meadow," as it is rendered in our version, but the succulent water-plants of the Nile.*

* See the Bible Illustrated by the Monuments of Egypt, p. 44.

When Joseph was summoned from the prison to attend the court, we find it recorded that "he shaved himself,"—a remarkable custom among the Egyptians, in which they differed from most other ancient nations of the East. It further appears that the Egyptian monarch had at his court a regular establishment of diviners or soothsayers, to whom he had applied for the interpretation of his dreams, from whence we may reasonably conclude that the sacerdotal caste had already acquired considerable political influence in Egypt; and this is further confirmed by the marriage of Joseph into a priestly family immediately after his appointment to the office of prime-minister. This marriage also shews that the rules of caste were not so rigid as they afterwards became, for at a subsequent period, intermarriages between priestly and other families, more especially strangers, were strictly prohibited.

The honours which Joseph received from Pharaoh throw considerable light on the progress of civilization at the period. Investiture of office was given by entrusting him with the signet-ring of the monarch, which proves that the arts of jewellery and engraving were known; he was clothed in a *khelát*, or official robe, as is still usual in the East; he received a gold chain, and was permitted to ride "in the second chariot," so that at this early age chariots were used in Egypt, not only for the purposes of war, but also of state.

The account of Joseph's administration shews that agriculture was conducted in the immediate vicinity of cities, "the food of the field which was round about every city laid he up in the same." This was probably

necessary for the purpose of security, as we shall soon see that the agricultural Egyptians were exposed to frequent incursions from their nomade neighbours. The taxation of Egypt was levied as a corn-rent, and hence royal officers were appointed to take an account of the produce, "Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number." *

Joseph's address to his brethren directs attention to the peril to which Egyptian civilization was exposed, from the defenceless condition of the north-eastern frontier: "Ye are spies, to see the nakedness (or unprotected state) of the land ye are come." Between the times of Abraham and Joseph, the incursions of the nomades from Arabia and Syria had inspired the Egyptians with an intense hatred of nomade or pastoral tribes. No objection was made to the reception of Abraham at court, but the Egyptians would not eat with the brethren of Joseph, because shepherds and Hebrews, or "wandering people," as the name signifies, were an abomination to the inhabitants of Egypt.

The whole scene of recognition between Joseph and his brethren, though a beautiful picture of domestic life and fraternal affection, adds little to our knowledge of the state of civilization. But there is one incident in the narrative, to which so many objections have been made, that it merits a brief notice. Joseph's steward says, when he charges the brethren with stealing the cup, "Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and

* From the monuments, it appears that the royal officers were present at the operations of winnowing and stowing, to take an account of the produce.—See the Bible Illustrated, etc. p. 40.

whereby indeed he divineth?" and Joseph himself says, "Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?" This simple statement appeared so difficult to many grave critics, as it alluded to a custom supposed to be without a parallel in ancient authors, that they suggested the necessity of a new reading or a new translation. "Who," exclaims Houbigant in his note on the passage, "ever heard of auguries taken by the agency of a cup?" * Baron Silvester de Sacy, however, has shewn from an incident in Norden's travels, that this very custom is still preserved in Egypt. By a singular coincidence, Baram Kashef told the travellers, that he had consulted his cup, and discovered that they were spies, who had come to examine how the land might be best invaded and subdued. †

The grant of the land of Goshen was no act of romantic generosity on the part of the reigning Pharaoh, it was the result of wise policy. His subjects, devoted to agricultural pursuits, disliked the care of cattle, and thus the pastures of Goshen were neglected, and the frontier left unprotected. He rendered the district profitable, and the rest of his kingdom secure, by assigning this exposed province to a brave and hardy race, who held it by the tenure of military service.

* Most people are aware that taking auguries from the grounds of coffee or tea in a cup is a common popular superstition, both in Great Britain and Ireland. Rules for determining the signification of the omens are given in various publications which still continue to circulate among the lower ranks of society.

† Hydromancy, or divination by some kind of fluid mirror, is a common superstition throughout the world: for instance, a Chinese work, describing the kingdom of Thibet, written in 1792, says, "sometimes they look into a jar of water, and see what is to happen."

Nouveau Journal Asiatique, Oct. 1829.

The Pharaoh himself plainly intimates that such was his motive—"if thou knowest any men of activity (that is, warriors) amongst them, then make them rulers over my cattle." The descendants of Jacob were faithful to their trust; they not only repelled the attacks of the plundering tribes from Western Asia, but carried the war into the enemies' country, and extended their incursions to Palestine; as we learn from the only passage in the Jewish records, which contains any notice of the history of the Israelites during the interval between the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses. In the enumeration of Joseph's grandchildren, (1 Chron. vii. 21-23), we find the following mention made of the descendants of Ephraim. "And Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Eser and Elead, whom the men of Gath that were born in that land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle." *

A great constitutional change was effected in Egypt during the administration of Joseph: he made the king lord of the soil, or proprietor of all the land save that which belonged to the priests, and this change greatly increased the power of the sovereign, and of the sacerdotal caste. But Egypt was to a considerable extent a constitutional monarchy, even in the days of Moses; for that inspired legislator, foreseeing that the Israelites would become weary of the Theocracy, and demand a king to rule over them, gave them instructions respecting the establishment of royalty, obviously derived from the approach to a constitutional monarchy, which he had witnessed in Egypt, as is obvious from the very apposite description of a despotic ruler given

* See Illustrations of the Bible, etc. p. 19.

by the prophet Samuel, who derived his idea of a king from the petty tyrants of Canaan. Moses principally dwells on the importance of a written code of laws, by which the monarch should be bound as well as his subjects. "And it shall be, when he sitteth on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests and the Levites; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life . . . that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left." It deserves also to be added, as a proof of the superiority of the Egyptians over the nations of Palestine, that Moses dwells very emphatically on the dangers of polygamy, both from having perceived the advantages of restriction in Egypt, and from his knowledge that the contrary practice prevailed in the country which the Israelites were about to inhabit. "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away." On the other hand, Samuel with equal emphasis denounces the certain system of domestic slavery and female degradation which would ensue from the establishment of monarchy in Israel.

The process of embalming, which requires some considerable skill in the medical art, was certainly known to the Egyptians in the age of Joseph, for the body of Jacob was subjected to that process, and that of Joseph was so well preserved as to be carried by the Israelites, without injury or inconvenience, through all their wanderings in the Desert, until it was finally deposited in the Promised Land. In the account of Jacob's funeral,

we meet, for the first time, with the mention of cavalry: "there went up both chariots and horsemen, a very great company." It is, however, very probable, that the use of horses for riding was rare until a much later period of history.

For our present purpose it is unnecessary to examine the history of Moses and the account he gives of the Exodus. We have abundantly proved elsewhere that the Pharaohs by whom the Israelites were oppressed belonged to a foreign and intrusive dynasty, and shewed how this explained the silence of the monuments respecting the ten plagues, and the silence of the Scriptures respecting Sesostris.* As our object is simply to collect the scattered and incidental notices relating to the state of Egyptian civilization, we have nothing to do with a period when Egypt was enslaved to strangers; and, therefore, we pass on to the notices of the country after it had recovered its independence.

Solomon, soon after his accession, opened a commercial intercourse with Egypt, and obtained from thence horses to mount his numerous cavalry; chariots, which were always among the finest works of Egyptian art; and linen-yarn,—"the king's merchants received the linen-yarn at a price." We have seen that so early as the days of Joseph, Egypt had become a commercial country, and we now find that it had advanced so far as to export its manufactures. There are no materials for a history of the rise and growth of manufacturing industry in Egypt, but there is abundant evidence of its great extent, and importance to the country. Not only the yarn, but the woven fabrics were imported from

* See Illustrations of the Bible, etc. p. 80.

thence into Palestine during the reign of Solomon, for the seducer in the Book of Proverbs says, "I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved work, with fine linen of Egypt." The prophet Isaiah, describing the misery which the foolishness of the Egyptian rulers was likely to bring upon their subjects, particularly alludes to the injuries that would be done to the spinners and weavers—"Moreover, they that work in fine flax, and they that weave net-works (or, white works), shall be confounded." * The prophet Ezekiel adds, that the export of textile fabrics from Egypt was an important branch of Phœnician commerce; for in his enumeration of the Tyrian articles of traffic he says,

* "Some persons have supposed that by 'white works,' as the original is more properly rendered, the prophet intended to describe the cotton manufactures, and this conjecture seemed to be confirmed by the muslin-like appearance of many of the robes depicted on the monuments. But a microscopic examination of the threads in the various specimens of Egyptian linen brought to this country has indisputably proved that none of them contain a single particle of cotton. There is also a species of linen found round the mummies which at once explains the cause of the glossy appearance to which reference has been made.

"The fabric has a considerable difference in the number of the threads, the difference being always in favour of the warp, in a superficial inch, of which we always find more threads than in one of the weft.

"This difference is so great in some specimens that the threads of the weft are completely hid by the others, which gives the linen manufactured on this principle a very silky or shining surface like satin.

"There is also a fabric which comes very near silk crape in appearance, which was probably used for ladies' dresses. This article must have been very dear, on account of the extreme fineness of the threads. It was so very transparent it might have been used for veils, and other articles of female attire, according to the paintings found on the sides of the tombs."—*Wilde's Narrative*, vol. i. p. 430.

"Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail; blue and purple from the isles of Elisha was that which covered thee." * Specimens of Egyptian broidered work are found covering the mummies, and some of the most remarkable varieties are thus described in a note appended to Dr. Wilde's very interesting Narrative of a Voyage in the Mediterranean.† "There are several specimens of the open linen embroidered with a double-threaded worsted, exactly like modern Berlin worsted." One of these is interesting:—the pattern represents roses with four petals, shaped like hearts, arranged in lozenges composed of buds of different colours, which cross the linen obliquely, and thus present the appearance of an embroidered net of many colours. There is another pattern in which we have a double pyramid in the centre of the lozenges, and the diagonal lines forming the pattern, like the centre pieces, made of little squares. In this pattern there are only green and orange worsteds; in the former we have three kinds of red, two blues, a white, and a yellow. In both cases the linen ground appears to have been dyed a nankeen colour.

"Our specimen is embroidered with a pattern like a shell, which is of different colours. The helix, or whirl, is in *purple worsted;*‡ and as the famous colour of

* It deserves to be remarked, that the prophet here joins the isles of Elisha, or Elis, that is of Western Greece, with Egypt; thus seeming to confirm the ancient tradition, recorded by Herodotus, of some Egyptian colonists having settled in those regions, which the sceptics of the German school of History have thought proper to deny.

† Vol. i. p. 431.

‡ It may be observed that Ezekiel assigns the purple fabrics to the

Hellas, or the Tyrian dye, was most probably found in this part of the shell, the chances are in favour of the artist using *it,* for the purpose of making the spiral from an ordinary association of ideas, or, as Square would have said, 'a certain fitness or propriety in devoting the colour to that part of the artificial shell in which it exists in the natural shell.'"

It is recorded that Solomon paid six hundred shekels* of silver, or about seventy-five pounds of our money, for an Egyptian chariot, while the price of a horse was only one hundred and fifty shekels, or the fourth part of that sum. We may therefore conclude that the chariots were of very superior workmanship, especially when we find it mentioned, as a proof of artistic skill in the ornamental parts of the Temple, that "the work was as the work of a chariot-wheel." In the book of Canticles, which, though it has a more holy and mystic import, was originally an epithalamic ode on Solomon's marriage with the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh, a singular proof is given of the beauty of the equipments of the chariots, and of the estimation in which they were held; for one of the compliments paid to the princess, is, "I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots."† These

isles of Elisha, or the districts of Western Greece; and this a little strengthens the tradition to which we have before alluded, of the ancient connexion between these regions and Egypt.

* According to Reland, the value of the silver shekel varied from 2*s.* 4*d.* to 2*s.* 10*d.*; we may therefore take 2*s.* 6*d.* as an average.

† This circumstance explains a difficult passage which has sadly perplexed the commentators. In the same song, Solomon, describing excessive joy, says, according to our version, "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib;" but the more correct translation is, "My soul set me on the chariots of a noble

chariots appear to have been the principal strength of the Egyptian army, for they are always prominently mentioned when any reference is made to the military strength of that country. Hence the prophet Isaiah, shewing the folly of those who trusted to the Egyptians against the Babylonians, instead of reposing confidence in the God of their fathers, says, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord."

The scriptural records more than once allude to the great advancement of learning among the Egyptians, and to the institutions that existed for the cultivation of the arts and sciences. Among the qualifications of Moses for the office of legislator, it is particularly mentioned that "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians;" and the highest praise bestowed upon Solomon, is, that "his wisdom excelled all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Isaiah, in his denunciation of divine wrath against Egypt, mentions the learned men as a separate and distinct class. "Surely the princes of Zoan* are fools, the counsel of the wise councillors of Pharaoh is become brutish; how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings? Where are they: where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the Lord of Hosts hath prepared for Egypt! The

people," that is, of the Egyptians; and thus rendered, the passage is a beautiful compliment to the country of the princess.

* Probably the city called Tanais by the Greeks; it was occasionally a royal residence.

princes of Zoan are become fools; the princes of Noph* are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the tribes thereof." This remarkable passage very clearly intimates, not only that men of learning formed a distinct class, but also that the councillors of state were chosen from their body.

We have shewn that Egypt possessed a constitutional government, at least to the extent of having the monarch's will controlled by a written code of laws; that it had an established religion, an organized hierarch, and a national worship; that it had institutions for instruction in the arts and sciences, the fame of which was spread into very distant lands; that it had an extensive system of commerce and manufactures; and that the Egyptian artists in some particular branches of industry, had attained a very considerable degree of eminence. We have formed this estimate of their civilization, not from their own monuments, which may possibly have been falsified in a later age; not from the direct accounts of the Greek historians, who were liable to be imposed upon by their authorities,—the Egyptian priests; but from the scattered hints and incidental notices in the history of another people, where there could be no possible motive for deception or misrepresentation.

Archdeacon Paley has ably shewn the great evidence derived from undesigned coincidence between two independent documents, for the authenticity and veracity of both.† The writer has elsewhere applied the argument to confirm the historical veracity of the Old Testament,

* Memphis, the capital of Lower Egypt.

† See the Horæ Paulinæ, *passim*.

from the pictorial records which the Egyptians have left of their manners and customs, and has shewn abundant evidence for the authority of the Old Testament in matters relating to Egypt.* But there have been recently some efforts made to diminish the amount and antiquity of Egyptian civilization by some zealous advocates of scriptural truth, and it seemed therefore of importance to shew that while the scriptural narrative is confirmed by the monuments, the state of civilization represented on the monuments is fully confirmed by Scripture. It is not necessary to enter further into this controversy: the elements of civilization, the existence of which we have established, are quite sufficient to shew that the Egyptians, at a very remote age, had attained a greater eminence in civilization than any other nation of which we possess a historical record.

Turning from the amount of Egyptian civilization to an examination of its nature or essence, we are everywhere struck with the prevalence of forms and fixed rules. This must necessarily be the case wherever the principle of caste is established, and all ancient authorities combine to prove that caste was more rigidly enforced in Egypt than in any other country. It may not be possible to give an accurate account of the origin of such a system, but there is still room for plausible conjecture.

In the earlier chapters we have shewn that most of the elements of civilization are valuable in proportion to the intelligence that has presided over their developement; and we have particularly noticed that every error

* See Illustrations of the Bible from the Monuments of Egypt.

which has misled humanity was not a pure falsehood, but contained within it a certain portion of truth, to which it was mainly indebted for its success.* The division of labour—one of the earliest principles of civilization—is exceedingly likely to have suggested the institution of caste, as it unquestionably did guilds, companies, and mercantile corporations, many of which very closely approximated to the principle of caste. It may be added, that in the infancy of the arts such a system might exist for a long time without producing any perceptible injury; it might even be attended with seeming good. It would obviously give fixity to the hierarchy of the state, and set the ruling classes above the fear of competition.

We by no means wish it to be understood that this system could have been thus introduced at once, and by a single effort; but we think it very probable that if the national mind was once turned in the wrong direction, nothing but external force could bring it back to the right path. Falsehood is not less pregnant than truth: unfortunately for mankind, erroneous opinions very rapidly generate pernicious institutions, which continue to maintain their existence, and even a considerable portion of their influence, long after the opinions on which they are founded have been abandoned by all the world.

The necessary result of caste is, that it fosters practice and excludes principle; it encourages the art, but

* This is more especially the case if the truth contained in the error is one that is generally neglected at the time. Thus the doctrine of the Divine Unity when Mohammedanism was first preached, was wholly lost among the idolatrous Arabs, and was greatly obscured among the Christian sects of Asia and Greece.

destroys the science. In religion, caste produces a tedious ceremonial and an unmeaning ritual, with little or no reference to creed; in politics, it creates a law fettered by usages and precedents, but destitute of the vivifying power of jurisprudence to accommodate it to times and circumstances; and in the arts of life, though it may increase the perfection of old processes, it effectually prevents new discoveries. Every one who visits a collection of Egyptian antiquities, will be equally struck by the excellence of the manipulation, and the poverty of invention displayed in the patterns.

Caste, therefore, renders civilization stationary, or rather causes it to retrograde, by removing farther and farther from view the intellectual and moral reasons of its enactments. Whatever may be the stock of civilization possessed by a people when the mind is thus rendered stereotype, its quality must begin to deteriorate, though the quantity may appear unvaried. Moreover, it lies at the mercy of accidents; a foreign invasion or a civil war may sweep away the skilful hands, and there is no stock of intelligence to supply the want of practical knowledge. Such undoubtedly was the case in Egypt, for after the Persian invasion the mechanical skill for which its artisans were celebrated, totally disappeared.

Another result of caste is, that the members prefer the interests of their class to the interests of their country. Heroclitus informs us that during the reign of Lethos, the warrior caste, indignant at the exclusive preference shewn to the sacerdotal caste, of which the king was himself a member, unanimously refused to march against the Assyrians; and in the reign of

Psammetichus, two hundred and forty thousand warriors, enraged at the favour which the monarch shewed to his Greek auxiliaries, migrated in a body to Ethiopia. There are obscure traces also of opposition to the royal power by the sacerdotal caste, when the monarch seemed more inclined to the warriors than to the priests.

The territorial division of Egypt into nomes aggravated the disunion arising from the system of caste, with which it was intimately connected. Isaiah directly points to the jealousies arising from these political and territorial distinctions as a chief cause of the downfal of Egypt. "I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians; and they shall fight every man against his brother and every one against his neighbour, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom." It was probably about the time of this prophecy that the Egyptians established the dodecarchy, or a government of twelve princes, to each of whom a particular part of Egypt was allotted. According to the few and obscure accounts which Herodotus gleaned from the priests, these rulers belonged to the warrior caste, but it was evidently intended that they should be subservient to the sacerdotal college, and its head the chief-priest. It is a dangerous experiment for a hierarchy to administer the government by the intervention of rulers not belonging to its body. Jealousy between the powers of the church and state, directly leading to open hostility, must be the inevitable result. Psammetichus, aided by a body of foreign mercenaries, destroyed the sacerdotal supremacy, expelled the other rulers, and made himself master of all Egypt.

Under the new race of monarchs, a social element

was introduced which dislocated the ancient system of civilization. Hitherto the Egyptians, like the Chinese, had prevented foreigners from passing beyond the frontiers, save in rare instances; they had avoided maritime affairs, abandoning the commerce of the Mediterranean to the Phœnicians; and since the age of Sesostris they had not attempted to enlarge their boundaries. Indeed Sesostris himself does not appear to have intended to make permanent conquests; he sought glory and plunder, not territorial acquisition. Psammetichus encouraged foreigners to enlist in his armies and settle in his seaports, and aimed at the conquest of Syria and Phœnicia, which contained the great commercial marts of antiquity. This course of policy was adopted by his successors; and whatever its merits may have been, it was quite inconsistent with the existing institutions of Egypt.

Hierocracy, and a system of caste, cannot be long maintained against the rival influence of free commercial intercourse, which always has a tendency to level distinctions. The Brahmins of India were so well aware of this fact, that they threatened loss of caste to all who went upon a long voyage. The disadvantages of caste must soon become obvious to those of the lower grades when they are brought into contact with persons unfettered with such restrictions; and the priests, if they wished to maintain their ancient system, should either have relaxed their old institutions, or prevented the development of the new element in society. The latter was a very hopeless task, but it was the alternative which they embraced. It is probably the course which would be adopted under similar

circumstances, by any caste or class accustomed to ascendency; men in such a state rarely accommodate themselves to the necessary changes, the process of adjustment is obviously difficult, and it appears to demand considerable sacrifices, scarcely to be expected from persons habituated to power and to the pride engendered by the possession of exclusive privileges. Even were an individual sufficiently enlightened to see that a sacrifice of power or dignity was rendered inevitable by the changes of times and circumstances, he would be restrained from adopting so prudent a course through fear of offending his class, and being stigmatised as a traitor. There were many of the French nobility, before the revolution, convinced that many privileges of their aristocracy—amongst others, exemption from taxation—ought to be abandoned; but they were prevented by the pride of class, from making or even supporting such a proposition.

The Egyptian priests were placed in open hostility to the new elements developed in the social system by extended foreign intercourse and maritime commerce, as all persons whose rank or power depends on ancient institutions are likely to be, to any new element developed in society. A contest was inevitable, in which the power of the hierarchy would have been greatly modified, if not abrogated, had not this result been more speedily effected by other circumstances, of a different nature.

When Necho, the son and successor of Psammetichus, defeated the Syrians, captured Jerusalem,* and over-

* 2 Kings xxiii. 33, and Herodotus ii. 159. The comparison of the two narratives exhibits an amusing example of the ignorance with

ran the country as far as the Euphrates, he came in contact with a new conquering empire, the Chaldean-Babylonian of course had to commence a new war, with a more fomidable enemy than any he had yet encountered. The battle of Carchemish, or Circesium, decided that the Babylonians should have the empire of Western Asia. The prophet Jeremiah has left us a description of this terrible encounter, uniting the force of poetry with the truth of history:

"The word of the Lord which came to the prophet Jeremiah against the Gentiles, against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah. Order ye the buckler and shield, and draw near to battle. Harness the horses, and get up ye horsemen, and stand forth with your helmets; furbish the spears, and put on the brigandenes. * Wherefore have I seen them dismayed and turned away back? and their mighty ones

which objections are frequently made against the historical veracity of Scripture. The Greek historian calls the city captured by Pharaoh Necho *Cadytis*, and as this name is not at all like Jerusalem, it has been supposed by some that the narratives are inconsistent. But the Jews frequently called their city *Cadesh* or "the holy," and in the Levant at this day, it is more commonly called *El Cods* "the holy," than Jerusalem. *Cadytis* is obviously the Greek form of this epithet, which Herodotus very naturally took for a proper name.

* The offensive and defensive weapons here enumerated are found delineated on all the Egyptian monuments which relate to military affairs, and thus confirm the minute accuracy of the prophet. On the other hand the prophet's account indisputably proves that the Egyptians had made such proficiency in the art of war as to possess a regular military establishment.

are beaten down and fled apace and look not back, for fear was round about, saith the Lord. "Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty man escape; they shall stumble and fall towards the north, by the river Euphrates.

"Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers? Egypt riseth up like a flood, and her waters are moved as the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof. Come up ye horses, and rage ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans that handle the shield, and the Luddim that handle and bend the bow.* For this is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries; and the sword shall devour, and it shall be made satiate and drunk with blood; for the Lord God of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates."

The battle of Circesium not only deprived the Egyptians of all their conquests, but laid open their country to the perils of a hostile invasion. The conquerors pursued Necho beyond his frontiers, but there are no sufficient means for determining the extent to which they penetrated. From the days of Necho to the present hour the possession of Syria has been uniformly

* The Luddim (inaccurately rendered Lydians in our version) were a people of Northern Africa, and tributary allies to the Egyptians. They appear to have supplied the archers, next to the chariots the most efficient corps in the Egyptian army. Some of the bows were of such great size that they could not be bent without a considerable effort. It may be added that the Egyptian archers drew the bow to the ear, like the old English yeomen, not to the breast, like Greeks and Romans.

sought by the several dynasties that have ruled in Egypt, and this object of their ambition has been the most frequent cause of revolutions in their country.

A fleet was necessary to the attainment of Necho's objects, and both he and his successor, Pharaoh Hophra, zealously exerted themselves to render Egypt a maritime power. In the early part of his reign, Hophra* was eminently successful; he sent an expedition against the island of Cyprus, captured the cities of Gaza and Sidon, vanquished the king of Tyre in a naval engagement, and restored to Egypt that influence in Syria of which she had been deprived by the victory of Nebuchadnezzar. The king of Judah was induced by these events to revolt against the Babylonians, and enter into strict alliance with the Egyptians. This course of policy was denounced by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who declared that to repose confidence in Egypt was "to lean on a broken reed." Their predictions were accomplished. The Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem, and Hophra, as he had promised, marched to its relief, but on surveying the hostile forces he marched home, leaving the Jews to the merciless rage of their enemies. Jerusalem was taken; Zedekiah was brought bound before the conqueror, who reproached the unhappy captive for his treason, ordered his children and friends to be slain before his face, deprived him of sight, and sent him fettered to Babylon.

The overthrow of the Jewish kingdom was generally attributed to the perfidious conduct of Pharaoh Hophra, and hence divine wrath was denounced against him by the prophets. Jeremiah's prediction of the monarch's

* Called Apries by the Greek historians.

fate was remarkably fulfilled; the prophet declared—"Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar his enemy, and that sought his life."

Military renown seems essential to the success of a monarch who attempts to make extensive and radical changes in the established institutions. A reverse of fortune is usually fatal to an innovator; the defeated soldiers are ever ready to throw the blame of their disaster on his erroneous policy. No one is so obnoxious to a popular cry as a reformer, and the more absurd the charge against him is, the more perilous is it likely to be in its consequences. Hophra declared war against the Grecian colonists settled in Cyrene; and as it was obviously dangerous to employ the Greek mercenaries in a campaign against their countrymen, he sent only his Egyptian warriors on the expedition. They were shamefully defeated: mortified by this sudden and unexpected check, they attributed their disgrace to Hophra himself, averring that he had sent them on this expedition to ensure their destruction. They persuaded themselves and others that his views were to weaken the power of the military class, and thus to remove the great barrier to his ambitious desire of subverting the constitution in church and state.

The standard of revolt was raised: Amasis, who was sent to reason with the insurgents, became their leader, and Hophra was deserted by all save his foreign mercenaries. These made a gallant resistance, but they were finally overwhelmed by numbers; Hophra

was taken prisoner, and was soon after strangled in prison.

It is remarkable that this revolution, undertaken to check the progress of innovation, introduced a greater innovation than any that had been yet attempted. Amasis the successful usurper, was a man of low caste, and consequently the fundamental laws were violated by his elevation to the throne. Indeed there is strong reason for believing that he was supported by the Assyrians, and that he purchased their assistance by becoming a tributary. However that may be, it is very clear that the entire reign of Amasis was a system of compromise; he favoured foreigners and encouraged commerce, while he bribed the priesthood, if not to connivance at least to forbearance, by rich donations and endowments. The overthrow of the Babylonian empire restored the independence of Egypt; and Amasis successfully exerted himself to efface the memory of his former vassalage. He refused to submit to the Persians who had founded a new empire on the ruins of Babylon, and died before he witnessed the fatal consequences.

Cambyses, king of Persia, was invited to invade Egypt by a deserter from the Greek mercenaries: Psammetichus, the last of the Pharaohs, made a brave resistance, but he was at length overthrown, and Egypt became what it has ever since remained, the heritage of foreigners. Excessive cruelty towards the Egyptian priests, rancorous persecution of the national religion, the destruction and pillage of the temples, are attributed to Cambyses; but these accounts are probably exaggerated, for they are all derived from the testimony of his enemies. A critical examination of his history

renders it probable that the hostility of the Persians was directed not so much against religious opinions and usages, as against the aristocratic corporation of the Egyptian priesthood; although it is impossible to separate one entirely from the other.* The influence of the sacerdotal caste under the latter Pharaohs was, indeed, no longer what it had been, but though weakened it had not been destroyed. They still possessed many exclusive privileges; they were the ruling caste, and both Psammetichus and Amasis had been forced to treat them with great consideration. Their interests, therefore, naturally clashed with those of a foreign conqueror; they stimulated the Egyptians to resist the invasion inch by inch, and the profanation of the temples and deities was the consequence of this political animosity. It was for the same reason that the Saracens refused quarter to the Greek monastics, in the provinces which they wrested from the Syrian empire.

In all the subsequent revolts of the Assyrians against the Persians, the priests were the principal fomenters of insurrection, and on them vengeance fell most

* This is Heeren's opinion, and it is certainly the view most consistent with the national character, both of the Persians and the Egyptians. It must, however, be observed, that the religious system of the Medes and Persians was more rigid and exclusive than any other form of ancient idolatry. They boasted that their laws changed not;—the friendship of the Darawesh, or reigning monarch, could not save Daniel from being thrown into the den of lions for adhering to the religion of his fathers,—the rage of Xerxes was principally directed against the temples when he invaded Greece,—and one of the earliest acts of Ardeshír Babegan, who founded the Sassanid dynasty, and restored the ancient royalty and religion of Persia, was to issue an edict prohibiting the exercise of any forms of worship save those authorized by the Magi.

heavily when the rebellions were suppressed. But as they had the monopoly of whatever science ancient Egypt possessed, their records were dispersed and lost in every successive persecution, their traditional knowledge became vague and obscure, so that in the time of Alexander the boasted wisdom of the Egyptians had become nothing more than a reminiscence and a name. Science, indeed, was revived by the Ptolemeys, but it was the science of a different system of civilization, and it never connected itself with a Theocracy.

The cause of the ruin of Egyptian civilization appears from the foregoing considerations, to have been the immutability which theocracy and the system of caste inflicted on the system. The priests, acting upon a belief in the continuance of unvarying opinion, defined every social relation, and dove-tailed the parts so nicely together, that any derangement threatened to dislocate the entire machine. Foreign invasion, intercourse with strangers, the extension of maritime commerce, combined with the ordinary progress of society, introduced new elements, for which there was no room in the ancient constitution; and hence a contest arose between the new and the old elements of society, in which the latter were weakened even by victory; the authority of the priesthood declined, and the troops withheld their obedience. Either of these circumstances must be fatal to a theocracy; both happened in Egypt, and "neither the swords of the mercenaries, nor the treasures of the people, could uphold the throne of the Pharaohs."*

* Heeren.

CHAPTER II.

BABYLONIAN AND ASSYRIAN CIVILIZATION.

NEXT to Egypt, Babylonia and the banks of the Euphrates offer objects of most interest to the historian of civilization. Nowhere did the cultivation of the earth make more rapid progress from well-directed labour, and nowhere did human industry reap richer harvests. Though frequently devastated by barbarous hordes, its cities seemed to realize the fable of the Phœnix, by the rapidity with which they rose from the ashes of their own destruction. "In the earliest records of the human race, the name of Babylon appears as the primeval seat of political society and the cradle of civilization. And this name endured, great and renowned, for a long succession of ages. At last, when Babylon declined—just at the time when, according to the projects of the Macedonian conqueror, it was destined to form the capital of Asia and the central point of his new monarchy—Seleucia sprung up and flourished near it on the Tigris; ere this city fell, it was eclipsed by Ctesiphon, the capital of the Parthian empire; when both these were destroyed by the conquering Arabs, the royal cities of Bagdad and Ormuz arose in their place; and the last glimmer, as it were, of the ancient splendour of Babylon seems still to hover over the half-ruined Bussorah." *

Great difficulties beset the investigation of the system

* Heeren's Asiatic Nations, vol. ii. p. 130.

of civilization which was established in this highly-favoured region: the notices of Babylon in Scripture are very scanty during the important interval between the Dispersion and the accession of Nebuchadnezzar; the accounts given by the Greek historians are loose and contradictory, and the few oriental records which we have, are so disguised by fable as scarcely to afford a statement on which reliance can be placed. Adulation and exaggeration have been the bane of oriental history; the poet-laureat was usually the historiographer of every eastern sovereign, and he took more than a poet's license in distorting facts by fancies. The monarch of the universe frequently meant the sovereign of a territory not larger than the county of Middlesex; an army of countless myriads was, in truth, not larger than a regiment of militia; and the splendour of a court, represented as surpassing even the fictions of fairy tales, was merely the barbaric pomp of a half-savage chieftain, who hoped to impose on his still more savage subjects by show and tinsel. A more amusing contrast could scarcely be conceived, than a description of the Persian court by a native writer and by a European traveller.

It is indeed easy to account for one monstrous exaggeration in eastern writers, the number of their armies. An oriental despot levies soldiers *en masse*; as he advances he compels all the male population to join his ranks, and as he never dreams of providing pay or provision, the number of deserters generally keeps a pretty even pace with that of the recruits. But though the soldiers disappear from the ranks, they hold their place in the muster-rolls of the army. By a convenient fiction, it is held impossible that any one who has been

offered an opportunity of exhibiting his devotedness to an imperial or royal master, should be so regardless of the honour as to return home; the leader who announced so disagreeable a truth, would run the peril of loosing his head; hence one-tenth, or even one-twentieth, is very often the proportion of available force which can be safely deduced from the official records of an eastern army. If Herodotus, as is probable, derived his estimate of the forces of Xerxes from a Persian source, it is not at all surprising that he has given a statement surpassing the bounds, not only of probability, but of possibility; the only wonder is, that he did not make them fifty millions instead of five.

Similar reasoning will not account for the enormous size attributed to ancient cities of the East, such as Nineveh and Babylon. But in this case the improbability arises from our transferring our notions of a modern city to those ancient capitals. Neither was a city of continuous streets and houses, such as those with which we are acquainted; they were an aggregation of villages, with their fields, farms and pasturage, enclosed by a common wall of defence. The prophet Jonah describes Nineveh, as "that Great City, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle." In this passage the mention of cattle clearly intimates that pastures were enclosed within the city walls. A similar account is given of Babylon by Quintus Curtius: "The buildings of this city," he says, "do not reach to the walls, but are at the distance of an acre from them. Neither is the whole city covered with houses, but only ninety fur-

longs; nor do the houses stand in rows by each other, but the intervals which separate them are sown and cultivated, that they may furnish subsistence in case of siege."

Although sacred and profane history unite in describing Babylon as a flourishing city in the most ancient times, still its age of glory can scarcely be dated earlier than the Chaldean conquest. The history of Ninus, Semiramis, and their descendants, is so involved in fable that it scarcely offers a single fact on which reliance can be placed; but from the Scripture we learn, that Babylon was celebrated for its manufactures so early as the age of Joshua, for it was the superior excellence of a Babylonish garment that tempted the cupidity of Achan. The prophet Isaiah, in a remarkable passage, describes the sudden rise of the Chasdim, or Chaldeans, and their success in wresting Babylonia from the Assyrians.

> Behold the land of the Chaldeans;
> This people was of no account:
> The Assyrians founded it for the inhabitants of the desert.
> They raised the watch-towers, they set up the palaces thereof.*

It appears from this statement, that the Chaldeans were a warlike nomade race, who invaded and subdued a country which had previously made a considerable advance in civilization; and from the boast of Nebuchadnezzar, "Is not this Babylon which I have built?"

* Isaiah xxiii. 13. Louth's Translation. The passage is thus rendered by Michaelis. "Behold the land of the Chaldeans; that nation which a little time since was not. The Assyrians subdued it, and gave it to the inhabitants of the desert; they transformed the wandering hordes of nations into settled residents, and built up the palaces of the land."

the conquerors seem to have adopted the arts of the vanquished. It is probable that caste existed in Babylon before the conquest, at least so far as the priesthood was concerned. The victorious race necessarily formed an aristocracy, or ascendency, and if the Chaldeans imparted their right of precedence to the sacerdotal caste, we have some explanation of the perplexing confusion between the Magians, or priests, and the Chaldeans, which meets us both in sacred and profane history. The best description of the Chasdim, or Chaldeans, when they invaded Babylon, is that given by the prophet Habakkuk.

Lo, I raise up the Chaldeans,
A bitter and a hasty nation,
Which marches far and wide in the earth,
To possess the dwellings which are not theirs!
They are terrible and dreadful,
Their decrees and their judgments proceed only from themselves.
Swifter than leopards are their horses,
And fiercer than the evening wolves.
Their horsemen prance proudly around;
And their horsemen shall come from afar;
They shall fly like the eagle pouncing on his prey.
They all shall come for violence in hordes;
Their glance is ever FORWARD!
They gather captives as the sand!
And they scoff at kings,
And princes are a scorn unto them.
They divide every stronghold;
They cast up mounds of earth and take it.

This graphic description of a rude, warlike race, will at once remind the reader of the character of the hordes which overthrew the Roman empire. The barbarians entered into possession of cities abounding in wealth and luxury, and were soon corrupted by debauchery

and licentiousness. It is evident from the character of the Chaldeans, that they did not originate the commerce and manufactures of Babylon; war was their trade, and conquest their object: on the contrary, the original Babylonians were an unwarlike timid race, fond of show, and accustomed to a multitude of artificial wants, which could only be gratified by commercial intercourse with distant countries. These considerations remove many of the inconsistencies which at first sight appear in the early accounts of Babylon; the discrepancy between the attributes of a warlike and of a commercial nation, is at once explained by the fact, that two distinct races, the military Chaldeans and the trading Babylonians, possessed the city when its history began to be important. The process of amalgamation between these races would probably have been very slow, had not the ascendency of the Chaldeans been subverted by the Persian conquest.

In large commercial cities, where multitudes of individuals are aggregated in a limited district, the relations between the sexes cannot be regulated by the same institutions as those of an agricultural population. There are temptations and opportunities for illicit and promiscuous intercourse, which must produce the most demoralizing results, unless they are carefully watched by the ruling powers, and unless remedial measures be devised by the legislator. This tendency to immorality is immeasurably increased, if the commercial population be subjected to a foreign or despotic power; self-respect, one of the greatest safeguards of virtue, is then removed, and profligacy, no longer shrouded in darkness, stalks forth boldly in noon-day. The moral condition of

Venice, under the yoke of Austria, and of Babylon after its conquest by the Chaldeans, equally prove that freedom and self-government are the only efficient checks to the corrupting influences of commercial wealth and a crowded population.

The luxury and licentiousness of Babylon were not less remarkable than the pomp and magnificence of the city. In no place were female manners more ostentatiously depraved; there was even a religious enactment for licentiousness. Herodotus informs us, that every woman was obliged by law to prostitute herself to strangers, in the temple of Mylitta, once in her life, and was not allowed to reject any stranger who presented himself. The debauchery at their banquets almost surpassed credibility; women appeared at these orgies, divested of their garments, and of every sense of shame; nor were these hired nautch-girls, but the wives and daughters of the guests.* At the impious feast of Belshazzar, not only his princes, but his wives and his concubines, were present, though the city was at that very moment beleaguered by the Persian hosts. It was in the midst, not merely of festivity, but of debauchery, that the hand appeared on the walls of the banqueting-house, and traced the letters of a doom

* Nihil urbis ejus corruptius moribus; nec ad irritandas inliciendasque immodicas voluptates instructius. Liberos conjugesque cum hospitibus stupro coire, modo pretium flagitii detur, parentes maritique patiuntur. Convíviales ludi tota Perside regibus purpuratisque cordi sunt; Babylonii maxime *in* vinum et quæ ebrietatem sequuntur perfusi sunt. Feminarum convivia ineuntium principis modestus est habitus, dein summa quæque amicula exuunt: paulatimque pudorem profanant: ad ultimum (horror auribus sit) una corporum velamenta projiciunt. Nec meretricum hoc dedecus est, sed matronarum virginumque, apud quas comitas habetur corporis vilitas.—CURTIUS v.

which was consummated ere the fumes of the surrounding intoxication had been dissipated.*

The form of government established by the Chaldeans in Babylon did not differ very much from the ordinary oriental despotism. The monarch was absolute; the court was composed of his creatures, whose rank depended entirely on the royal will, but still had a regular gradation of title; the empire was divided into provinces or satrapies, in which the governors usually possessed both the civil and military authority; finally, there was a sacerdotal caste, the members of which must have possessed considerable influence from their supposed power of predicting future events. But in what relation the priests stood to the other orders of the state is unknown, and how they acquired the name of Chaldeans, which properly belonged to a people, is still matter of conjecture.

It appears from these circumstances that the real amount of civilization in Babylon was not very great, and that it was probably in extent and kind very similar to that of Bagdad under the Khaliphs. Commerce appears to have flowed to it, at least as much on account of its geographical position as from either the skill or enterprise of its inhabitants. Commerce brought wealth, but it also brought a dense population, and no adequate means were employed to check the abuses which necessarily arise from the accumulation of human

* From Xenophon's account, it appears that the very guards were intoxicated. We may remark that this circumstance was predicted by the prophet Isaiah, in his denunciation of divine wrath against Babylon.

> The table is prepared, the watch is set; they eat, they drink.
> Rise, O ye princes, anoint the shield!

beings within the circuit of a wall. The rude but warlike Chaldeans soon became enervated by the corrupting influences of the luxurious race they had vanquished, and when the enthusiasm of conquest had faded away, they fell an easy prey to the Persians. The utter ruin of the city followed the decline of its trade; there were no stone buildings, and when the walls of sun-dried brick were once allowed to fall into disrepair, they were gradually washed away and reduced to their original earth. Hence unsightly mounds alone remain to shew where "the Queen of the East" once stood, and the terrible denunciation of the prophet has been fulfilled to the letter.

Babylon shall become—she that was the beauty of kingdoms,
The glory of the pride of the Chaldeans—
As the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah by the hand of God.
It shall not be inhabited for ever;
Nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation,
Neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there;
Neither shall the shepherds make their folds there.
But there shall the wild beasts of the desert lodge;
And howling monsters shall fill their houses;
And there shall the daughters of the ostrich dwell;
And there shall the satyrs hold their revels,
And wolves shall howl to one another in their palaces,
And dragons in their voluptuous pavilions.*

From the few particulars recorded of the Assyrian empire, it appears to have been lower in the scale of civilization than the Babylonian. Nineveh, according to the description of the prophet Nahum, was an encampment rather than a commercial mart; its destruction therefore produced very little effect on surrounding nations, and its very name soon sunk into oblivion.

* Isaiah xiii. 19—22.

CHAPTER III.

PERSIAN CIVILIZATION.

"THE Persian Empire," says Professor Heeren, "owed its origin to one of those great political revolutions which are of such frequent occurrence in Asia. A rude mountain tribe of nomade habits rushed with impetuous rapidity from its fastnesses, and overwhelmed all the nations of Southern Asia (the Arabians excepted), from the Mediterranean to the Indus and Jaxartes. Even the nearest parts of Europe and Asia were shaken by their onset, and to a certain extent subdued; and in spite of frequent insurrections which broke out in these and other portions of their empire, and were not always completely repressed, the Persians continued to maintain their general supremacy for a period of full two centuries."*

Few nations of antiquity seem to have taken more pains to transmit an account of their early history, policy, and government, to posterity. We find in the Book of Esther that a record was kept in the royal chronicles of every important event connected with the administration. When the conspiracy of the eunuchs against Ahasuerus was discovered by Mordecai, "inquisition was made of the matter, and when it was found out, they were both hanged on a tree, and it was written

* Heeren's Asiatic Nations, i. 92.

in the Book of the Chronicles before the king."* But notwithstanding all their care, our knowledge of the political and social condition of the ancient Persians is principally derived from the writings of the Hebrews and the Greeks; the native records were destroyed in the many successive revolutions which have desolated Central Asia; and the few facts imperfectly preserved by tradition have been so perverted by national pride and poetic fiction, that they can scarcely be received as illustrations, much less as authorities.

From the time of the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great (B.C. 330) to the restoration of a native dynasty by Ardeshír Babegan (A.D. 226), a period of more than five centuries, Persia was subject to the iron rule of foreigners, who hated and persecuted her ancient literature, institutions, and religion. The Seleucidæ, who inherited the dominions of Alexander in Asia, made it the great object of their policy to Hellenize the nations subject to their sway; they persecuted equally the religion of the Jews and of the Persians, and they speedily lost their empire over both. Headed by the gallant Maccabees, the Jews recovered their independence, but the Persians only exchanged the Syrian yoke for that of the Parthians—a race indeed cognate to their own, but for that very reason eager to destroy the memory of their former degradation.

If any effort was made after the restoration of the Sassanid to collect the scattered materials of Persian history, and to gather the memorials of the early greatness of the nation, it is obvious that after the lapse of five centuries such labours could not have been very

* Esther ii. 23.

successful. Some religious books were probably preserved by the priests who found shelter in the mountains of Irán: the ballads in which Xenophon informs us that the memory of popular heroes and monarchs was celebrated,* might have survived in tradition, and from these an imperfect record might have been compiled. But even these scanty records had to undergo new and more fiery ordeals: the Arabs, in the first burst of their enthusiasm after their embracing Mohammedanism, with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, overran and subdued Persia, destroying in the fury of their fanaticism every memorial of its ancient religion and history. Doubts have been thrown on the burning of the library at Alexandria by the followers of the prophet of Mecca, but no one has ever questioned the destruction of the great library collected at Ctesiphon or Al Modain; it was one of the first objects against which the bigotry of the Arab conquerors was directed.

"We learn," says Sir John Malcolm, "from every cotemporary historian, that the followers of the prophet of Arabia were so irritated by the obstinacy with which the Persians defended their independence and their religion, that they destroyed with bigoted fury all that could keep alive a spirit they found it so difficult to subdue: cities were razed; temples were burnt; the holy priests that officiated in them were slaughtered; and the books in which were written whatever the learned of the nation knew, either of general science or of their own history and religion, were, with their possessors, devoted to destruction. The priests of the

* Xenophon Cyrop. sub init.

Persians, who were termed *mujous*,* or magi, were all considered sorcerers, and their profane works were viewed as the implements of their wicked art. For a proof of this feeling, we have only to refer to the popular tales of Arabia, where we find that every act of wickedness or of witchcraft, is the deed of a Gueber, or Gaur;† and that term, which means no more than a follower of Zoroaster, has, from the impressions it excited at the dawn of their religion, become synonymous with the reproachful epithet of infidel over the whole Mohammedan world."‡

It was not until nearly after four centuries that any effort was made to collect the relics of the Persian archives which survived the second catastrophe, and the few fragments recovered were given to the poet Firdausi by the celebrated Mahmood of Ghizni, to form the basis of an epic poem. The Sháh-Námeh, or Book of Kings, as Firdausi's poem is called, has thus become the great source of all the subsequent accounts of Persia written by natives of that country; from what we have said, it is evident that the poet's materials must have been miserably scanty; and it may be added, that his attention was more particularly directed to whatever concerned Eastern Persia, to which his patron belonged, and that he neglected Western Persia, which was pre-

* This comes from the Persian word *mugh*, which signifies an infidel priest; generally applied to the priests of the Guebers, but sometimes to Christians. This word is sometimes used in Persian poetry to signify a tavern-keeper. This is, however, only a metaphorical application of the term.—M.

† Gaur is a corrupt abbreviation of Gueber, as Moal is of Mogul, etc.—M.

‡ Sir J. Malcolm's Persia, i. 200.

cisely the part that most occupied the attention of the Greeks and the Hebrews.

Some oriental antiquarians have shewn a disposition to prefer the native Persian accounts to those of the Greeks, but the preceding statement is quite sufficient to prove that the authority of Fudausi cannot be placed in competition with that of Herodotus. On the other hand, the Rev. Dr. Wall has argued from the present inconsistency and absurdity of Persian history, as given by native writers, that the Persians never had historical records. All the authorities, sacred and profane, however, concur in establishing the fact that chronicles were regularly kept under the inspection of the monarch; and assuredly, the invasion of the Greeks, five centuries of slavery under the Parthians, the Mohammedan conquest, and four ensuing centuries of anarchy and confusion, are quite sufficient to account for their dispersion.

The traditions preserved in the sacred books of the Parsees, the descendants of those adherents of the native religion of Persia who were so fortunate as to escape from Mohammedan bigotry, rest on different and higher authority. It is not attempted to deny that they have been greatly corrupted in the long course of ages; but still they contain legends bearing so obviously the stamp of remote antiquity, that nothing but extreme scepticism would lead to their rejection.

According to the Vendidat, the most ancient portion of the Zendavesta, the original country of the Persians was *Eriene-Veedjoo,* from which their race migrated in a westerly direction, settling successively in sixteen different localities, to each of which they gave the name

Eriene, obviously the same as *Iran,* the modern name of Persia. Although it is scarcely possible to determine accurately the position of these sixteen settlements, it is clear from the mention of Soghdi as the earliest, that the legend assigns the origin of the race to the mountainous regions extending from the Altaic range to the Paropamisan chain and the Himmalaya; that is to the country which we have in a former chapter shewn to have been most probably the first habitation of the human race after the Deluge. The tradition adds, that the Iranians commenced their migrations with a considerable stock of civilization; Jemshíd,* their leader and legislator, instructed them in the arts of agriculture, tillage, and cattle breeding, and gave them institutions suited to a settled community.

But the nature of the country did not permit all the settlers to follow the same occupations. Irán, or Persia, contains probably a greater variety of soils than any other country of the same size; its most fertile spots are often in close proximity to the desert. Only a small number could devote themselves to agriculture; the rest, either as shepherds or herdsmen, became nomades. Thus, "by the variety of their occupations, rather than the diversity of their origin,"† the original race was divided into distinct tribes; some of which, like the Medes and Bactrians, acquired wealth and power from agriculture, for which their land was suited,

* The Achæmenes of the Greeks; even in the days of Herodotus this hero was referred to the ages of fable and tradition; and it is a singular confirmation of that historian's veracity, to find that Jemshid has always been reverenced as the founder of their race by the native Persians.

† Heeren's Asiatic Nations, i. 329.

and from commerce, the highways of which crossed their territory. Others, like the Persians, continued a nomade life, as shepherds and herdsmen in their native fastnesses. Not a little of the confusion in the early history of Asia arises from the monarchs of one race being often confounded with those of another by courtly genealogists, who thought to flatter the pride of the reigning monarch by shewing that every hero of eminence was to be ranked among his ancestors.

Like all other pastoral races, the ancient Persians were divided into several tribes, of which the most noble was the Pasargadæ; and the tribes themselves were subdivided into families, in which great importance was attributed to purity of descent. As might also be expected, the leading family claimed Jemshíd for its founder, and was hence called the Achæmenidæ.

This constitution of tribes and families has always prevailed among the nomade races of central and southern Asia: it prevails amongst the Arabs, the Mongols, and more particularly among the Afghans, who in modern history have most remarkably exemplified the process by which a political constitution is gradually formed from the mere association of tribes.* Indeed the modern history of the Afghans is the best comment on the early career of the Persians.

The Medes disputed the dominion of central Asia with the Babylonians; they called themselves Arii, a name probably identical with the Sanscrit *Arya*,† which

* See Elphinstone's Account of Caubul—the most interesting and philosophical account of a people in the state of transition from a nomade to a political life that has ever been published.

† The Brahmins divide mankind into the Aryas, or pure, and Mlechas, or impure, just as the Greeks only recognised the distinction of Hellenes and Barbarians.

signifies a man of pure descent. A young Persian prince induced his countrymen to revolt against the Median ascendency, and assumed the imposing name of Khoresh, or Cyrus, which signifies *the sun*.* He triumphed over all opposition, extended his empire from the borders of India to the shores of the Mediterranean, established the Persians as the ascendant race, the Pasargadæ as the ruling tribe, and the Archæmenidæ as the royal family.

When we thus view the object and result of the great revolution effected by Cyrus, it appears obvious that the Persian empire could not, even in its most prosperous days, have been universally and equally civilized. The ascendant race, and more especially the ruling tribe, attained a degree of improvement by possessing leisure for the cultivation of the arts of peace and luxury; the other tribes remained in their original barbarism, and had little if any share in this advancement. We find from Herodotus, and from the historians of Alexander, that this distinction was universally observed; and that, even in war, the ascendency or superiority of the royal race and tribe was very ostentatiously maintained.

The institutions adopted by Cyrus for the governmen of the empire he acquired, were such as might have been anticipated from a conquest effected by nomade tribes.

* Khor, in Parsee, signifies the sun—hence

> That delightful province of the sun,
> The first of Persia's lands he shines upon,

has received the name of Khor-assan. The name Khoresh was taken by several other sovereigns, and like the Egyptian Pharaoh seems to have been frequently used as a title.

Armies of occupation were quartered in the conquered provinces, which the inhabitants were compelled to support; tributes were levied at the discretion of the sovereign; garrisons were placed in the cities and fortresses, and commercial intercourse was viewed with suspicion and discouraged.* Nations that made a fierce resistance, or proved refractory after their subjugation, were transplanted into other lands, and in some instances warlike tribes were compelled to adopt habits of luxury and effeminacy. Laws were made to encourage the ascendant race to maintain their superiority by practising the warlike arts which had been the source of their success; but these laws soon fell into disuetude. The Persians, like all other nomade conquerors, soon adopted the manners and customs of the more civilized nations they had subdued, just as the Mantchew Tartars have adopted the institutions and habits of their Chinese subjects.† But it was from the Medes that the Persians derived most of their institutions, and hence their laws are in Scripture invariably called "the laws of the Medes and Persians." The notion of immutable law, to which Daniel so nearly fell a victim, was of Median, not Persian, invention;‡ for when a Persian

* The jealousy of foreigners manifested by the government of China is not to be attributed to the Chinese themselves, but to the Mantchew Tartars who have conquered the country.

† Herodotus remarks, that "no nation in the world was so ready to adopt foreign customs as the Persians."

‡ Some objections have been made to the historical authority of the Book of Daniel, on account of the mention of "Darius the Mede;" because from all other authorities it appears that the ruler's name was Cyaxares, or Kai Kaoos; but Darius, or more properly Darawesh, is not so much a proper name as a title of dignity, and signifies simply

monarch proposed to marry his sister, a union forbidden by ancient laws, his courtiers informed him that there was a law permitting the king of Persia to act as he pleased.

The revolution effected by Cyrus was religious as well as political; the sacerdotal caste was exclusively Median, and the transfer of ascendency to the Persians was therefore calculated to weaken their authority. We see, from the history of Daniel, that they were exceedingly jealous of strangers, and that it was on a religious pretext they attempted the ruin of the Jewish minister. From the partiality which Cyrus shewed to Daniel, and the entire nation of the Jews, it may be concluded that this monarch was not favourably disposed towards the exclusive claims of the Median priesthood, though there is no direct evidence that he openly declared himself their enemy, as his son and successor Cambyses undoubtedly did. The Jews, however, have a tradition that he was instructed in the true religion by the prophet Daniel, and that he exerted himself to substitute the worship of Jehovah for the system of idolatry established among the Medes and Babylonians.

It would lead too far from the subject to enter into any discussion of the life of Cyrus; volumes have been written on the relative claims of Xenophon and Hero-

"a monarch," and hence the royal coins of Persia, under whatever sovereign they were minted, were called Darics.

In like manner Ahasuerus, or Achaz Zwerosh, is more an epithet than a name, and signifies "a brave hero." Not only in the history of eastern but of western nations great confusion has arisen from mistaking titles for proper names: thus, Brennus is usually given as the name of the Gallic chieftain who conquered Rome; it is merely the Latin form of his Celtic title Brenn, which signifies "a general."

dotus to be received as the decisive authority; and the advocates of both have equally appealed to the brief notices in Scripture, as confirmations of their views. It may, however, be noticed that Xenophon in his preface pretty plainly intimates his purpose to write a romance rather than a biography, and the authorities to which he appeals are the popular ballads of Persia, and not its historical records.

Cambyses persecuted the sacerdotal caste in Egypt, as he had previously done in Persia, and the Magi entered into a conspiracy for his overthrow. It is not very easy to explain the plot that elevated the pretended Smerdis to the throne, but from the imperfect accounts we possess, it is evident that the plot was formed by the Magi, and that its object was the restoration of empire to the Medes.* It seems probable that the impediments offered to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, notwithstanding the decree of Cyrus, were imposed upon the Jews by the Median usurper, who was jealous of their attachment to the Persian race.†

The revolution by which the Magian usurpation was overthrown proved fatal to the supremacy of the sacerdotal caste; they were everywhere slaughtered by the Persians, and night alone saved the entire order from extermination. A festival was instituted to commemorate their overthrow, and for many years afterwards no Magian could venture to appear in public on this anniversary.

* Plato distinctly says, "Cambyses was for his debauchery and madness deprived of his empire by the Medes, by means of the eunuchs, but Darius restored the kingdom to the Persians.

† Ezra iv. 7—24.

The question which was agitated after the overthrow of the usurper, whether the empire should be governed by a monarchy, an aristocracy, or a democracy, has been rejected as an improbable fiction, simply because it has been misunderstood. There is nothing more likely than that the heads of half-settled tribes, as the leaders of the Persian revolution undoubtedly were, should deliberate whether they would restore the ancient independence of tribes, preserve the ascendency of the Pasargadæ, or royal tribe, or submit to a single ruler. A similar difficulty presented itself to the Afghans after the expulsion of Shah Soojah, and they established a species of aristocratic republic, under the Baurikzye brothers; similar forms of government are common in the Rajpoot states, and were sometimes adopted by the Mongolian hordes. The circumstance has been deemed improbable, from European ideas having been attached to the terms aristocracy and democracy, but when they are interpreted according to the known usages and temper of oriental nations, the deliberation on the form of government becomes one of the most natural that could have arisen from the situation of affairs.

Darius Hystaspes, or in the oriental form, the Darawésh Gushtasp, was descended from the royal family of the Achæmenidæ, that is from Jemshíd, the great founder of the nation. Although in Asiatic nations primogeniture does not determine the right of succession, yet the choice of a monarch is usually restricted to a single family: thus the Turks, who seem only to have encamped in Europe, retaining fondly the usages of their nomade ancestors, notwithstanding all the changes of realm and the chances of time, always choose

their sultan from the house of Othman. And this limitation explains the cause of the fratricides with which so many oriental sovereigns have commenced their reigns.

Under the reign of Darius Hystaspes, the Persian system of civilization received its definite form and almost its complete development. His great object was the organization of the empire; and this was a meritorious labour, even though the basis on which it rested may have been erroneous. No system would seem less likely to be permanent than the Turkish, and yet it has lasted for several centuries, because it is complete in all its parts.

The adoption of a fixed residence by the monarch led to the abandonment of nomade life by the royal tribe of the Pasargadæ; but neither the king nor his nobles abandoned the domestic habits of their ancient life, particularly the practice of polygamy, which we have in a former chapter shewn to be a characteristic of pastoral and wandering tribes. Darius also divided the empire into satrapies, or provinces, assigning to each regular governments, and a civil administration distinct from the military. Had the monarch abandoned all plans of conquest, and devoted his attention exclusively to developing the resources of his empire, a gradual system of improvement would have arisen, and the heterogeneous materials of which his dominions were composed might have been fused and amalgamated. But it is rarely that a nomade race of warriors sinks down into a peaceful nation: centuries elapsed before the Turks abandoned their plans and hopes for the entire subjugation of western Europe; the dream of

universal dominion was not peculiar to the Persians; it has always been adopted by every victorious race of nomades—by the Arabs, the Mongols, and the Mantchew conquerors of China.

Darius resolved to conquer Greece, a country peculiarly unfitted for the movements of cavalry, in which the Persians, like every other nomade race, principally excelled. He levied armies on the usual plan of oriental despots—that is to say, by conscription *en masse*—and sent these untrained hordes to fight against a people who, beside their courage and patriotism, had the inestimable advantage of military discipline. They were defeated; but the immense losses at Marathon, Salamis, and Platæa, and the vast sums wasted on these mighty armaments, were of less importance than the change wrought in the national character. The Persians almost immediately ceased to be a race of warriors, and sunk into luxury, debauchery, and effeminacy; they entrusted the defence of their empire to bands of mercenaries, just as the Turks in later imes reposed their confidence almost exclusively in the battalions of janizaries, recruited from Christian slaves.

The demoralizing influence of mercenary troops extended farther than Persia; it corrupted the states which supplied, not less than that which employed, these hireling bands. We find Xenophon, an Athenian of rank and a philosopher of no mean character, selling his services as an adventurer to a treacherous usurper, against a prince with whom his country was in close alliance. Nay, we find him consulting with Socrates on the occasion, and the great moralist making no attempt to shew him that such a course was manifestly

iniquitous. From Xenophon's own record it is easy to discover the calamitous effects produced by the employment of mercenaries in Persia; it was to the foreign troops that Cyrus the younger looked for aid in his revolt against his brother, and it was on them that the turbulent satraps chiefly relied in their frequent revolts against their sovereign.

Heeren justly remarks, that "mercenaries frequently render the times subsequent to a war more disastrous than the war itself;" bands of men held together only by the hopes of pay and plunder, and selling themselves without scruple to the highest bidder, must soon degenerate into hordes of banditti; and the historian of the "Ten Thousand" is unable to hide that such was the result with his celebrated companions. In like manner, during the feudal ages, the Free Companies when not engaged in the service of a monarch, made war upon their own account, and kept the greater part of Europe in continual terror. This evil is now remedied by the establishment of standing armies, and though many abuses must necessarily follow from such an institution, far more disastrous consequences would ensue from a return to the ancient system.

But nothing contributed so strongly to the ruin of the Persian empire, as the constitution of the harem and the court. Wherever woman is degraded by the pride or passion of man from her proper position as "a help meet for him," to his toy, his slave, and his victim, she has avenged herself by acquiring illegitimate influence as a compensation for her rights, and female power is generally most formidable where it is least recognised. From the Book of Esther we can form a

correct notion of the interior economy of a Persian palace. The timid queen risks her life by coming uninvited into the presence of her lord, but when she employs the blandishments of her sex, the master in his turn becomes the slave, his firmest purposes are changed, and his favourite minister sacrificed without a struggle.

Esther's exertion of influence was directed to a noble aim and a patriotic purpose; but the fragments of Ctesias shew us that other queens of Persia employed the same means to gratify the worst extravagances of revenge, jealousy and ambition. It was at such a banquet as Esther's, that queen Amestris obtained from Xerxes power over her sister-in-law, and mutilated her in a manner too horrible to be described.

Uncertainty of succession is the necessary result from the existence of a harem, and this has produced innumerable civil wars in every age of oriental history. In ancient as in modern Persia, every vacancy of the throne produced fratricide, assassination, and not unfrequently civil war, so that the empire was periodically subjected to the most frightful disorders. These evils were aggravated by the constitution of the court, which consisted chiefly of the royal tribe of the Pasargadæ, men who claimed clanship or relationship with the sovereign, and therefore added pride of birth to insolence of station. Both causes led them to tyrannize over the other subjects of the empire, and as they had the monopoly of all high offices, the rest of the nation was severely oppressed to gratify the rapacity of this "subordination of vultures." Hence the great body of the nation felt little influence in the fate of their

rulers; one or two pitched battles decided the fate of Persia; there was no national resistance to the invader—it seemed as if Darius and Alexander merely contended for the military occupation of the country, while the great body of the nation looked on as unconcerned spectators.

It is impossible not to be struck with the similarity between the ancient Persians and the modern Turks; both were essentially nomades, and continued so in character and partly in habit, long after they had acquired settled abodes. The adherence to the usages of their ancestral life has been with both the chief element of their weakness and their barbarism, and in all probability will in both cases produce the ruin of their empire. Fanaticism, indeed, has been a conservative principle which has long maintained Turkey, but it is very doubtful whether its efficacy would resist the efforts of Russia, did not the mutual jealousy of the European powers prevent them from permitting schemes of conquest.

CHAPTER IV.

PHŒNICIAN AND CARTHAGINIAN CIVILIZATION.

From empires founded by warlike races of nomade conquerors, in which the efforts of the legislators were chiefly directed to maintain as much as possible the training and the feelings belonging to their ancient wandering life, after the community had become settled, we turn to a race owing its pre-eminence almost exclusively to the arts of peace. "The Phœnicians," says Heeren, "spread themselves, not by fire and sword, and sanguinary contests, but by peaceable and slower efforts, yet equally certain. No overthrown cities and desolated countries, such as marked the military expeditions of the Medes and Assyrians, denoted their progress, but a long series of flourishing colonies, agriculture, and the arts of peace, among the previously rude barbarians, pointed out the victorious career of the Tyrian Hercules."*

The Phœnicians belonged to the same race as the Canaanites and Syrians, and probably were a trading people on the coasts of the Red Sea before they migrated to the Mediterranean. Though not equal to the Egyptians, the Canaanites had attained a very high

* Heeren's Asiatic Nations, ii. 57. There can be no doubt that the mythus of the Tyrian Hercules describes the maritime progress of the Phœnicians, for wherever they formed a colony they established the worship of their national deity.

degree of civilization so early as the days of Abraham. A portion of them, at least, retained the original purity of religion, and worshipped the one true God, as is evident from the history of Melchizedek. But at the same time traces may be discovered of the increase of the worship of the productive powers of Nature, a form of idolatry which has always led to sensuality and licentiousness. Their mode of government was monarchical, but not despotic; the public business was transacted in popular assemblies, and each petty king was obliged to consult his subjects before entering into any important engagement. It was to the children of Heth, not to their king, that Abraham bowed himself when about to make a purchase of land; Ephron did not treat with the patriarch alone; the whole tribe took a share in the transaction; and Hamar, king of Shechem, consulted his subjects respecting the answer he should make to the proposals of the sons of Jacob. Each city had its own king, as was the case in Greece during the heroic ages, but though independent of each other, they were frequently united by some form of confederation; we find for instance, "the five kings of the cities of the plain" leagued together against Chedorlaomer. The cities were strongly fortified; in the words of the sacred historian, they were "great, and fenced up to heaven." Exorbitant ambition and lust of rule could not have been among their vices, or else there would not have been so many petty kingdoms remaining when the country was invaded by Joshua. There is, indeed, one exception, in the instance of Adonizebek; but the sacred narrative shews that his ambitious cruelty was a rare and individual example.

The separation of the Canaanites into so many petty states greatly facilitated the progress of an invading army; it was not until the submission of Gibeon, which appears to have excited more alarm than the destruction of Ai, that a combination was formed to resist the progress of Joshua, and even then five monarchs only joined the confederacy. Still the resistance of the Canaanites was very pertinacious: notwithstanding the miraculous aid which the Israelites received, six years elapsed before the conquest of Canaan was effected, and even then it was far from complete, for the Israelites, weary of the war, permitted many of the tribes to remain in their original habitations.

The Israelite wars must have destroyed a great part of the land trade of the Syrians, and consequently must have given a stimulus to the maritime enterprise of those who had settled along the coast between Aradus and Tyre. Their country was the natural asylum of those who fled before Joshua; it was a short line of coast, rich in bays and harbours, protected by the chain of Mount Lebanus, whose heights not only covered the land, but being crowned with magnificent forests, supplied valuable materials for fleets and habitations. In the Book of Joshua, Tyre is mentioned as "a strong city," and apparently as the limit of the dominions of the Israelites on their western frontier, and we find it similarly described when the children of Israel were numbered by command of David.

An enterprising population in a restricted territory naturally devotes itself to commerce and manufactures; and in the earliest ages we find the Phœnicians celebrated for their skill and industry in various produc-

tions of art. Their females particularly excelled in spinning and weaving. In the forty-fifth Psalm, which was primarily designed as a nuptial ode on the marriage of Solomon with an Egyptian princess, though prophetically it sets forth "the majesty and grace of Christ's kingdom," it is particularly mentioned that "the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift." In the sixth book of the Iliad, we find Hecuba selecting a garment embroidered by Phœnician captives, as the most costly offering to conciliate the goddess Minerva:

> The Phrygian queen to her rich wardrobe went,
> Where treasured odours breath'd a costly scent.
> There lay the vestures of no vulgar art,
> Sidonian maids embroider'd every part,
> Whom from soft Sidon youthful Paris bore,
> With Helen, touching on the Tyrian shore.*

But it was for the superiority of their dyes that the Phœnicians were principally celebrated. The Tyrian purple formed one of the most extensive and highly-prized luxuries of antiquity. Homer informs us, that a girdle of this precious material was deemed an adequate exchange for a golden goblet.

> The parting heroes mutual presents left:
> A golden goblet was thy grandsire's gift;
> Œneus, a belt of matchless work bestowed,
> That rich with Tyrian dye refulgent glow'd.†

It would lead us too far from our immediate subject to examine the nature of the dyes used by the Phœnicians. It will be sufficient to say, that they produced every variety of tint, and had the art of giving their stuffs that lustrous appearance which we usually call a shot-colour.‡

* Iliad vi. † Ib.

‡ The reader will find a very full account of the Phœnician dyes in Amati De Restitutione Purpuranim.

Glass was an article of which the Phœnicians claimed the invention; but, as we have seen, it was known in Egypt from remote antiquity. But though not the inventors, the Phœnicians were the most extensive manufacturers of glass in ancient times. The principal establishments for this branch of industry, were at Sidon and Sarepta, and the sand employed was obtained from the little river Belus, which flows at the foot of Mount Carmel. With this art was joined the manufacture of toys, baubles, and various ornaments, with which the Phœnicians supplied the surrounding nations.* Eumæus, in reciting his adventures in the Odyssey, mentions a chain of gold and amber brought by Phœnician merchants to the palace of his father:

> An artist to my father's palace came,
> With gold and amber chains' elaborate frame:
> Each female eye the glittering links employ;
> They turn, review, and cheapen every toy.†

The land-trade of the Phœnicians was very extensive. They maintained an intercourse with the extreme south of Arabia, with India, Babylonia, and Persia, and with

* "If," says Heeren, "we may assume that the ornaments worn by the Jewish ladies were of Phœnician manufacture, which can scarcely be doubted, then the passage in Isaiah iii. 18, will give us an accurate view of them:—'In that day will the Lord take away the ornaments of feet-buckles, and the cawls, and the little moons; the earrings, and the little chains (query, bracelets?) and the veils; the frontlets, and the feet-chains, and the girdles, and the smelling bottles, and the amulets: the rings for the fingers, and the nose-rings; the holiday clothes, and the petticoats, and the mantles, and the pockets; the mirrors, and the shifts, and the turbans, and the flowers.'—(*Gesenius's Translation.*) In the following verse are mentioned the artificial hair arrangements, 'the well-curled locks.'"—*Heeren's Asiatic Nations*, ii. 90.

† Odyssey, xv.

the wild tribes of the Caucasus. The twenty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel enumerates the different marts on the Indian sea visited by the merchants of Tyre; and some of the places mentioned, Aden, Canna, and Haran, retain their names unchanged to the present day. But the maritime commerce of the Phœnicians was still more celebrated than their caravan trade. The prophet Ezekiel has enlarged, with great force and elegance, on the effect that the predicted fall of Tyre would produce in the distant lands with which that city was connected by the ties of commerce:

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning Tyre:
At the sound of thy fall, at the cry of the wounded,
At the great slaughter in the midst of thee, shall not the islands tremble?
And shall not all the princes of the sea descend from their thrones,
And lay aside their robes, and strip off their embroidered garments?
They shall clothe themselves with trembling, they shall sit on the ground;
They shall tremble every moment, they shall be astonished at thee;
And they shall utter a lamentation over thee, and say unto thee—
How art thou lost, thou that wast inhabited from the seas!
The renowned city that was strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants,
That struck with terror all her neighbours!
Now shall the coasts tremble in the day of thy fall,
And the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure.*

* Ezekiel xxvi. 15—18. The corresponding prediction of Isaiah is equally remarkable:

Howl, O ye ships of Tarshish (Western Europe),
For she is utterly destroyed within and without.
From the land of Chittim (the Greek isles) the tidings are brought unto them!
Be silent, O ye inhabitants of the sea-coast!
The merchants of Sidon, they that pass over the sea, crowded thee;
And the seed of the Nile, growing from abundant waters,
The harvest of the river, was her revenue;
And she became the mart of nations.

The Phœnicians navigated the Red and the Indian seas. They had commercial establishments on the Bahrein islands, in the Persian Gulf, and most probably a factory in the island of Ceylon; and in Spain, the Tarshish of the Scriptures, a name subsequently preserved in the city of Tartessus. A Phœnician squadron, employed by Pharaoh Necho, circumnavigated Africa, and discovered the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, six centuries before the Christian era. Some doubts have been thrown on this achievement, though the testimony of Herodotus is express on the subject; and the very circumstance which he relates as incredible, namely, that in the course of their voyage the marines had seen the sun in the north, which of course they must have done after crossing the equator, is a decisive proof of the truth of the history. There is unquestionable evidence that the Phœnicians traded with the British islands, principally for tin; and there are plausible grounds for conjecturing, that they had found an entrance into the Baltic. It is, indeed, certain that they possessed a greater share of nautical skill than any other nation of antiquity, and that they displayed a greater spirit of enterprise than the Genoese, or the Venetians, in the middle ages.

Be thou ashamed, O Sidon, for the sea hath spoken;
Even the mighty fortress of the sea, saying,—
"I am as if I had not travailed nor brought forth children;
As if I had not nourished youths, nor educated virgins."
When the tidings shall reach Egypt,
They shall be seized with anguish at the tidings of Tyre!
Pass ye over to Tarshish—howl, O ye inhabitants of the sea-coast!
Is this your triumphant city, whose antiquity is of the earliest date?
Her own feet bear her far away to sojourn.

ISAIAH xxiii. 1—7.

Three demoralizing influences are usually found in the history of most commercial states, especially those of antiquity: a jealous tyrrany over subject and subsidiary states, the employment of mercenary troops, and the institution of slavery; and these are found to co-exist with much political knowledge, and a large share of constitutional freedom. Imperfect as our acquaintance with Tyrian history is, we can distinctly trace the ruinous effects of these causes in the circumstances that heralded and led to the overthrow of Tyre. About the time of Solomon, Tyre obtained political supremacy over the other cities of Phœnicia, and imposed restrictions on their trade, to prevent their rivalling the capital. Instances of such short-sighted policy are unfortunately too abundant, both in ancient and modern times, for us to reprehend the Tyrians too severely. So late as the reign of William III., the English parliament addressed the king to discourage the woollen manufactures in Ireland; and one of the principal objects in the colonial legislation of Spain, was to prevent the growth of manufacturing industry in her American possessions. The palpable injustice of such legislation needs no comment; but it is of importance to shew, that it must fail to accomplish the end proposed, and must, besides, involve in heavy loss those for whose benefit the attempt is made. When the Dutch destroyed the spice trees in the Moluccas, for the purpose of keeping the trade in their own hands by conferring it to one spot, they, in effect, held out an encouragement to the other nations of Europe to attempt the cultivation of spices in other parts of Asia. They did so, and they succeeded. The islands where

the trees had been destroyed were ruined, and the contractors for the produce in the places where they had been spared, were forced to compete with new rivals, and were reduced to beggary in the struggle. The Tyrians destroyed the trade of Arvad, Sidon, and Sarepta, but they did not gain the commerce of those cities; on the contrary, it was divided among the Greeks, and soon enabled them to become formidable rivals of the Phœnicians.

The prophet Ezekiel distinctly mentions the mercenaries employed by the Tyrians: "They of Persia, and of Lud, and of Phut, were in thine armies, thy men of war; they hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they set forth thy comeliness. The men of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadims were in thy towers; they hanged their shields upon their walls round about; they have made thy beauty perfect."* It is probable that these mercenaries proved faithless when the city was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, for we read of no attempt being made to raise the siege. The cities of Phœnicia dependent on Tyre joined the invader, as they formerly joined Chalmaneser, for they preferred the despotism of the Assyrians and Babylonians to the commercial tyranny of their own countrymen.

Though the government of Tyre may properly be

* There is some difficulty in determining the geographical position of the nations mentioned as supplying Tyre with soldiers: Lud may either mean the Lydians, or the Luddim, a nation of Africa. Phut, according to Josephus, is in Mauritania; Arvad or Aradus was a Phœnician city. The Gammadim, or "strong men," were probably a select body of warriors, so named from their strength and appearance, not from their nation.

called constitutional, for the authority of the king was limited by that of the magistrates and council, this freedom was felt only by the citizens; none of its blessings were extended to the slaves. Indeed, though the Tyrian "merchants were princes, and her traders the honourable of the earth," the lower ranks of society were generally wretched. The prophet Isaiah, in his denunciation against Tyre, emphatically dwells on the distinctions of rank and fortune in the city:

> And it shall be as with the people, so with the priest;
> As with the slave, so with his master;
> As with the handmaid, so with her mistress;
> As with the buyer, so with the seller;
> As with the borrower, so with the lender;
> As with the usurer, so with the giver of usury.*

But though we possess very scanty materials for a history of the poor and the lower ranks in Tyre, and indeed among the nations of antiquity generally, we have abundant evidence of the extent to which the slave trade was carried by the Phœnicians, and the evils that slavery produced in their country. Though Palestine was the granary of Tyre, and a friendly intercourse cemented by treaty existed between the Jews and the Phœnicians from the age of Solomon, the Tyrians did not scruple to steal the children of their allies, and sell them as slaves beyond the seas. The prophet Joel severely reprobates this iniquity, and threatens a similar fate to the children of Tyre. "The children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem, have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border. Behold, I will raise them out

* Isaiah xxii. 2.

of the place, whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head; and I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hands of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off; for the Lord hath spoken it."* The prophet Amos likewise mentions the slave-dealing of the Phœnicians, and the advantage they took of the misfortunes of the Jewish kingdom, to extend this detestable traffic. "Thus saith the Lord: For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the covenant of brethren."† The legendary history of ancient Greece is full of allusions to the piracies and kidnapping propensities of the Phœnicians. In the Odyssey, we find Eumæus, the swineherd of Ulysses, declaring his royal parentage, and relating the base arts by which the Phœnician pirates seduced him when a child from his father's palace. The passage is too illustrative of the ancient iniquity of the slave-trade to be omitted:

Freighted it seems with toys of every sort,
A ship of Sidon anchor'd in our port,
What time it chanced the palace entertain'd,
Skill'd in rich works, a woman of their land;
This nymph, where anchored the Phœnician train,
To wash her robes descending to the main,
A smooth-tongued sailor won her to his mind,
For love deceives the best of woman-kind.

* * * * *

She then proceeds: "Now let our compact made,
Be nor by signal, nor by word betray'd,
Nor near me any of your crew descried
By road frequented, nor by fountain-side.

* Joel iii. 6—8. † Amos i. 9.

Be silence still our guard; the monarch's spies
(For watchful age is ready to surmise)
Are still at hand; and this revealed, must be
Death to yourselves, eternal chains to me.
Your vessel loaded, and your traffic past,
Dispatch a wary messenger with haste:
Then gold and costly treasures will I bring,
And more, the infant offspring of the king.
Him childlike wandering forth, I'll lead away,
A noble prize, and to your ship convey."*

He then relates how the detestable plot was put into execution. Many other legends also might be quoted, but the express testimony of the ancient historians to the great extent of this detestable traffic, is so decisive as to leave no doubt on the subject.

The demoralizing influence of slavery on the owners and masters of slaves has been already noticed. Isaiah dwells strongly on the profligacy and licentiousness of the Tyrians, comparing their city to a harlot; indeed slavery everywhere produces a striking corruption of morals, and more especially supplies incentives to the early and premature depravity of youth. Slavery is twice cursed; "it curses him that yields, and him that rules," and the degradation of the ruler is both the more deep and the more permanent.† Among the

* Odyssey, xv.

† We find the following striking fragment preserved in the Life of Dr. M'Crie, just published by his son. "Who would be a slave? is the exclamation of those who are themselves free, and sometimes of those who, provided they enjoy freedom themselves, care not though the whole world were in bondage. But there is a sentiment still more noble than that. Who would be a slave-dealer, a patron, an advocate of slavery? To be a slave has been the hard but not dishonourable lot of many a good man and noble spirit. But to be a tyrant—that is disgrace! To trample on the rights of his fellow-creature—to treat him, whether it be with cruelty or kindness, as a

Tyrians slavery was carried to the worst excess, and it provoked one of the most fearful retributions recorded in history. Justin informs us that the slaves in Tyre formed a conspiracy against their masters, murdered them all in one night, married their mistresses, and slew all males that did not belong to their race. They chose Strato for their sovereign. In the reign of his son, the city was taken by the Macedonians, and Alexander justified his atrocious massacre of the inhabitants by declaring that they ought to be treated as revolted slaves.

The progress of the Phœnicians in learning and the sciences has been celebrated by the Greek historians, who assert that Europe, and particularly Greece, derived the knowledge of arithmetic, astronomy, and the rise of letters, from the Phœnicians. Their statements, however, are too vague and general for us to derive any exact information respecting the nature and extent of the Phœnician studies.

Though commerce has been the great civilizer of nations, yet it may be so perverted and misapplied as to become a source of degradation and ruin. It is a common error to regard the accumulation of wealth as the sole end of commerce, and then to assume that wealth always produces demoralizing consequences. It

dog—to hold him in chains when he has perpetrated or threatens no violence—to carry him with a rope round his neck, not to the scaffold but to the market—to sell him whom God made after his own image, and whom Christ redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, and by the act of transference to tear him from his own bowels —*that* is disgraceful. I protest before you, that I would a thousand times rather have my brow branded with the name of *Slave* than have written on the palm of my hand or sole of my foot the initial letter of the word *Tyrant*."—*M'Crie's Life*. 279.

becomes then a matter deserving consideration, whether the vices which undeniably prevailed in Tyre are to be attributed to trade or wealth, or whether they can be traced to causes quite independent of commerce and national riches.* In the first place, however, we must say a few words on traffic generally, and shew that it is not less natural to man—that is, not less obviously an end and purpose of his being, than labour.

"There is a design for which all things were made and ordained, going beyond the things themselves. To say that things were made, or that the arrangement and relations of things were ordained for their own sake, is a proposition without meaning. The world, its structure, productions, laws, and events, have no good nor evil in them—none, but as they produce these results in the experience of living creatures."† If traffic be a natural propensity of man, and still more if it be a necessity forced upon him by his physical and moral constitution, there must be an end in business beyond supply, and an object in the acquisition of wealth beyond success; both must contribute to man's well-being, and therefore to the great essential of human welfare, moral culture.

It is possible to conceive man so constituted as to produce every thing necessary for his sustenance by his individual labour, without being compelled to make

* It is of importance to bear in mind the distinction between national and individual wealth, so often confounded by loose reasoners on this subject. The immense difference between the two cases is stated with great force and clearness in Archbishop Whately's Second Lecture on Political Economy, from which a great part of the reasoning in this section is borrowed.

† Dewey's Moral Views, 49.

exchanges with his fellows. He might have been like the lilies of the field, that toil not, neither do they spin, and yet are arrayed more gorgeously than Solomon in all his glory; he might have been covered by nature like the birds of the air, or the beasts of the field, and like them he might have been freed from the necessity of dressing his food. But this is not the case; man is essentially an exchanging animal, and arguing from the analogies of nature, the impulse to exchange must serve some moral purpose.

It is not difficult to discover that purpose; for what is trade? "It is the constant adjustment of the claims of different parties, a man's self being one of the parties."* The merchant and trader every hour is called upon to adjust the competition between rights and interests. And this competition is to be adjusted by no definite rule, and very often by no definite suggestion of conscience. Questions daily arise in commerce which may be decided without offending against any precept of honesty, or any assignable principle of rectitude, which would yet lead to violations of all uprightness. Conscience is the law of business, and hence the earliest commercial nations placed trade under the sanction of religion. Among all the nations of antiquity, we cannot find a single great commercial mart which was not also celebrated as the shrine and sanctuary of some great deity.† It was felt that there

* Dewey's Moral Views, 51.

† "There is," says Dr. Dewey, "a temple in one of the cities of Europe, through which is the very passage to the market-place, and those who pass there often rest their burthens, to turn aside and kneel at the altar of prayer. So were it meet that all men should enter on their daily business. The temple of Mammon should be the temple

was constant calls for the exercise of uprightness, candour and good-will, but it was also known that these qualities derived additional strength from every occasion for their exercise. Commerce could not long exist without commercial men daily and almost hourly making sacrifices of self-interest to principle; and from its requiring such sacrifices, trade appears to be a part of that moral training devised by Omniscience for the improvement of his creatures. It may, no doubt, be perverted, and frequently is so; but so is every element connected with the probation of humanity. In itself it contains no demoralizing principle; it only corrupts those who are willing to be corrupted.

Commerce is not necessarily demoralizing, nor dishonourable; on the contrary, it has strong tendencies to foster a high principle of rectitude and honour; the existing amount of commercial credit in this country is a remarkable evidence of the amount of commercial virtue, for we know by bitter experience that any great fraud, by whomsoever committed, shakes credit to its very foundation. But many believe, that though commerce is not demoralizing, yet that the wealth produced by commerce may exercise a pernicious and destructive influence, and they quote as evidence the many declarations against the deceitfulness of riches contained in the Holy Scriptures.*

of God. The gates of trade should be as the entrance to the sanctuary of conscience. There is an eye of witnessing and searching scrutiny fixed upon every one of its doings. The presence of that all-seeing One, not confined, as some imagine, to the silent church or the solitary grove;—the presence of God, I think it not too solemn to say, is in every counting-room and warehouse of the crowded mart, and ought to make it holy ground."—*Dewey's Moral Views*, 53.

* This question has been thoroughly examined in all its bearings

In the examination of this argument, or rather this prejudice, it is of importance to observe that the Jews never were a trading people, and that the means by which riches are acquired, and the mode in which they are used, vary with the situation and circumstances of a nation. In Palestine, assuredly, there were not so many honourable paths to fortune open as there are now in England, and the most common, that of farming the taxes, was in its very nature one that exercised a corrupting influence. It armed rapacity with the sword of justice; the publican, whether innocent or guilty, was odious to those from whom he took their earnings, and whom he at the same time compelled to acknowledge the slavery of their nation. At no time is the tax-gatherer a welcome visitor, but when he comes as the instrument of a foreign power, he is viewed with absolute detestation. Such a feeling re-acts upon its object; let society treat any man as an enemy, and he will become the bitter enemy of society; the publican had the scorn of the Jews, and this induced him to earn it. The pursuit of wealth, therefore, may under particular circumstances be far more perilous to virtue at one time than at another; and there can be no doubt that in Palestine, such a pursuit was subject to peculiar conditions of immorality.

It must also be remembered that it is not against riches, but against the use made of them, that the Scriptural denunciations are directed: "Your gold and

by Archbishop Whately, in his Seventh Lecture on Political Economy. The points noticed in the text are only those which are most commonly urged by hasty reasoners. For a complete answer we must refer our readers to the Archbishop's volume.

silver is cankered," says St. James, "and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and eat your flesh as it were fire." It is then the *rust* of riches, the abuse superinduced on them, that corrupts and destroys. The consuming passions which they may engender, not the proper employment of them, constitute the peril to which men are exposed by their possession. This is quite a different thing from national wealth; for riches are comparative: a poor nation, such as Hungary, may have many rich men, and a rich nation, such as Holland, may have very few remarkable for the extent of their possessions. Wealth of itself is an element of happiness, but it may be so appropriated and distributed as to produce great misery.

When we proceed to examine the causes of the decline and fall of the Phœnicians, we find that they misapplied the powers which they derived from commerce. We have seen that a trading individual is daily exposed to temptations, arising from a struggle between his interests and his principles; trading nations are exposed to the like trial, and with a greater chance of fall, for men collectively will perpetrate deeds at which they would individually shudder. The great temptation to a commercial people is monopoly, and though this is demonstrably ruinous to commerce, yet as it seems to present great and immediate profits, there never has been a nation that has not more or less yielded to this system of policy, and established selfishness as a principle of action. The prophet Ezekiel clearly intimates that the Tyrians, in the later ages of their state, had introduced fraud and violence into their commerce: "Thou hast defiled thy sanctuary by the multitude of

thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, in the sight of all them that behold thee."* As in private life, acts of imprudence, and still more of vice, prove more ruinous to the merchant and trader than to the landholder or the workman, so we may find that national crimes prove more directly ruinous to commercial states than to any others. Extensive commerce involves extensive responsibility; fortunate is that commercial people which feels the sanctity of the trust reposed in it, which is sensible that trade is an instrument placed in its hands by Providence, for nobler purposes than promoting the wealth of nations; that it is one of the means designed to promote universally "Peace on earth, good-will towards men." But if such a nation prove faithless to its trust and blind to its destiny—if it wields its mighty powers to crush the energies, the industry, and the intelligence both of aliens and dependents—if it seeks unhallowed gains regardless of means; the age of its prosperity is dated, and the barren rock where Tyre once stood is at once the type and the warning of its fate.

Though the Carthaginian system of civilization was directly derived from that of Tyre, it was developed under circumstances which produced marked differences in the policy and fortunes of the two states. The colony of a free people generally exhibits greater freedom than the parent state; the transplanted institutions are delivered from the limitations which antiquity and precedent had brought round them, and necessarily

* Ezekiel xxviii. 18.

receive greater extension and wider application. In the early struggles of a colony there is a greater feeling of equality among the members, and a stronger spirit of freedom, than in a settled state. Every man's pride is nurtured by his feelings of conscious superiority over the barbarous race near which, or amid which, he is settled; and while fear of the aborigines produces community and union, this pride keeps alive the feelings of individual independence. In Carthage, the supreme power was more restricted than in Tyre; the senate possessed greater authority, and the commons were a recognised body in the state.

Carthage did not become remarkable in history until it had "touched the highest point of all its greatness," and made the fatal change in its policy which led to its ruin. At first the Carthaginians sought only commercial intercourse with the surrounding nations; but in order to prevent the rivalry of the Greek colonies, they began to aim at territorial aggrandizement, and they particularly courted the possession of Sicily and the islands in the western Mediterranean. Hence arose the necessity for employing mercenary troops, not only during war, but as garrisons in time of peace; and hence also came the ambition of military chiefs to become dictators in the republic. "A Carthaginian army," says Heeren, "would have been a more interesting spectacle for one who desired to study the human species than for any information it afforded respecting military tactics. It was an assemblage of the most opposite races of the human species, from the farthest parts of the globe. Hordes of half-naked Gauls were ranged next to companies of white-clothed Iberians, and

savage Ligurians next to the far-travelled Nasamones and Lotophagi; Carthaginians and Phœnici-Africans occupied the centre; while innumerable troops of Numidian horsemen, taken from all the tribes of the Desert, swarmed around upon unsaddled horses, and composed the wings; the van was composed of Balearic slingers; and a line of colossal elephants, with their Ethiopian guides, formed, as it were, a chain of moving fortresses before the whole army. . . . . Almost half Africa and Europe were in the pay of this rich republic."*

The advantages of such a system are few: the chief was, that foreign defeats scarcely inflicted any injury on Carthage beyond pecuniary loss. Two remarkable incidents shew that the lives of the mercenaries were lightly esteemed by the republic; a band of them which had begun to mutiny was unscrupulously left on one of the Lipari islands to perish by famine, and when Hamilcar was forced to enter into a treaty, he only stipulated for the lives of the Carthaginian citizens, and abandoned the rest of his forces to their fate. But there was just as little real attachment on the part of the mercenaries towards the republic. They were faithful so long as they could get better pay nowhere else, and not a moment longer. Carthage was more than once in danger of destruction from the mutinous mercenaries when their pay was in arrear.

It was no easy matter to collect such an army; it was difficult to manage it when assembled, for the great diversity of languages was a constant source of confusion; and when the services of the soldiers were no longer required, it was found a perilous experiment to

* Heeren's African Nations, i. 251.

dismiss them. When the Carthaginians resolved to have provinces instead of factories, and garrisons instead of colonies, it was necessary to have a large force to keep possession of the conquered lands. But the military occupation of a country is very expensive, and it often happens that the revenues of a province will not defray the expenses of its garrisons. The Carthaginian possessions in Sicily never paid the cost of their occupation, much less of their conquest. Countries held by the tenure of military occupation are always misgoverned; and those belonging to a commercial state are generally the worst treated of all, for they are regarded as a kind of commodities from which the owners have a right to derive the greatest possible profit. The history of every East India Company that has had possessions beyond the Cape, but more particularly that of the Dutch, shews how systematically the rights of the natives are sacrificed to the thirst for gain by merchant-princes. The constitutional freedom enjoyed by the Carthaginians themselves, was far from teaching them a regard for the rights and privileges of others; it was long ago remarked, that where the free man was the greatest of freemen, the slave was the greatest of slaves. In the United States, at the present hour, slavery is advocated most strenuously by those who support the very extreme of democratic opinions. The provincials were therefore always disaffected to the Carthaginians, and the state scarcely ever suffered any severe disaster abroad that was not immediately aggravated by revolt at home. From the time that a nation of merchants becomes a nation of princes, and exchanges commercial pursuits for territorial possessions, it aban-

dons its proper strength for alien weakness, and fixes the limits of its own duration.

Military chiefs in a commercial state are always dangerous to its liberties: the constitution of Carthage was frequently on the point of being overthrown by its generals; it was for this reason that the centumvirate was instituted—a council consisting of one hundred men, the business of which was to superintend the conduct of the generals, and place a check to their ambition. But this institution could not remedy the evil; for to the very end of the republic, a successful warrior might engross the entire authority of the state, by procuring an accumulation of offices in his own person.

A general may assume illegal and even tyrannical power without formally taking the title of monarch. Hamilcar Barca, after having subdued a rebellion in Africa, led his army into Spain without waiting for authority or permission, and by his acquisitions in that country, the Peru of the ancient world, obtained sufficient influence to undermine the constitution without formally overthrowing it. His bribes, which the treasures of Spain amply supplied, enabled him to procure the support of a strong faction among the people and in the senate, while his conquests gratified the passion for territorial acquisitions which was then popular among the Carthaginians. His son-in-law, Aschubal, continued the same course of policy; and when, on his death, an attempt was made to bring to trial those who had taken bribes from Hamilcar and Aschubal, Hannibal, the son of the former, precipitated the war against Rome, to divert public attention from the inquiry.

During the whole of the second Punic war, a strong party in the Carthaginian senate deprecated the continuance of hostilities, and looked upon the victories at the Ticinus, Thrasymené and Cannæ as barren triumphs. The difference between the two parties in the contest is very striking: Rome was not in danger, though Hannibal remained several years in Italy; Carthage was in imminent peril, the very moment that Scipio effected a landing in Africa: repeated defeats did not force the Romans to submission; the single overthrow at Zama compelled the Carthaginians to yield almost at discretion. It is therefore not quite just to regard the motives of those who opposed Hannibal, as purely selfish and factious; they felt that wars on land and conquests of provinces were unsuited to a commercial people, and the event proved that they were right in their opinions.

A manifest injury arising from these territorial conquests and victories on land, was, that maritime affairs were neglected. We can trace the gradual decline of Carthage as a naval power from the time that an attempt was made to effect the conquest of Sicily. Ever afterwards the army was regarded as of more importance than the navy; and no stronger proof can be given of the neglect of the maritime forces of the republic, than that Scipio transported his army into Africa without meeting a single vessel of war to interrupt his progress.

The spirit of party and faction scarcely appeared in Carthage until after the republic had yielded to the heat of conquest and the passion for territorial aggrandizement—soldiers and merchants are not very harmonious elements in a state: the war which the former

desires as his only chance of rising in the world, is fatal to the commerce of the latter; it closes markets against his commodities, and it subjects trade to the heavy pressure of taxation. The wealthy aristocracy of Carthage opposed the war with Rome, but the wealth which the Barcine family acquired in Spain enabled them to overcome all opposition. Still the strength of Carthage in the war depended merely on its mercenaries and its money—it was founded on sand and gold-dust; when the tide of fortune turned, both were swept away.

The fate of Carthage was sealed at the close of the second Punic war: the commerce which the citizens had abandoned for the possession of provinces and the barren laurels of military triumph, never returned to its former channels; the provincials whom they had oppressed during the era of their greatness, sought revenge in their destruction; and the mercenaries no longer receiving pay, abandoned them to their fate.

Never did any country more fatally exhibit the ruinous and demoralizing influence of an ambitious and military spirit in a trading community; never did any nation shew so forcibly, that when injustice mingles with commerce, the process of destruction is begun, and every hour of its progress accelerates its velocity.

There were some demoralizing influences in the social and domestic relations of the Carthaginians, which appear to have been aggravated by their foreign wars. Their religion allowed the horrid rites of Moloch; they attempted to propitiate their deities by human sacrifices, and they multiplied these victims when the results of a campaign were dangerous or doubtful. Tertullian assures us, that this horrid practice was not abandoned

until long after the conquest of Africa by the Romans, and he dwells particularly on the great extent to which the sacrifice of infants was carried. He assures us that mothers made it a merit to view their own offspring perish in the devouring flames without testifying any emotion, and that they hushed the cries of the innocent victims by kisses and embraces, lest the expected favour of the divinities should be withdrawn in consequence of any appearance of reluctance or regret.

We have already mentioned the perils attending the relations between the sexes in commercial communities. The Babylonian women prostituted themselves to strangers in the temple of Mylitta; the Phœnician women did the same in the temple of Ashtaroth, or Astarte, at Byblus; and a like system was established in the temple of Venus, at Carthage. To this ostentatious disregard of female honour, we may fairly attribute the frequency of infanticide. Every thing that has the slightest tendency to encourage promiscuous intercourse, or to diminish the sanctity of the marriage bond, is a direct incentive to child-murder. In our own days, some among those who call themselves Socialists, have advocated a removal of the restrictions which society has imposed on the commerce of the sexes, because these restrictions may in some instances become onerous and painful. It would be well to ask these gentlemen, whether infanticide is not a greater evil than any of those which they propose to remove? If they deny that their principles have any such tendency, let an appeal be made to the pamphlets published by their own booksellers, and in the name of their own apostles, in which something very like infanticide is

directly recommended. It is unnecessary to dwell on a subject so painful, or to mention the evils which these pernicious doctrines have wrought within the sphere of our own experience. A philosophic blockhead is the most incurable of all blockheads; and Robert Owen was not the first, nor will he be the last, who undesignedly has made his philosophy an excuse for rascality.

We have seen that commerce is a moral dispensation, and that its highest ends are moral; but we have also seen that the dispensation may be perverted, and the end deliberately put out of sight. The history of the two great communities which we have examined, proves that commerce did not exert any corrupting influence until it had been itself designedly corrupted. We have not disguised the fact, that the temptations which beset commerce are greater than those in any other pursuit; but so much nobler is the reward, and so much greater is the virtue, when they are overcome.

"There is no being in the world," says Dr. Dewey, "for whom I feel a higher moral respect and admiration, than for the upright man of business: no, not for the philanthropist, the missionary, or the martyr. I feel that I could more easily be a martyr, than a man of that lofty moral uprightness. And let me say, yet more distinctly, that it is not for the generous man that I feel this kind of respect—generosity seems to me a lower quality, a mere impulse, compared with the lofty virtue I speak of. It is not for the man who distributes extensive charities, who bestows magnificent donations. That may be all very well—I speak not to disparage it—I wish there were more of it; and yet it may all consist with a want of the true lofty unbending

uprightness. That is not the man then of whom I speak; but it is he who stands, amidst all the swaying interests, and perilous exigences of trade, firm, calm, disinterested, and upright. It is the man who can see another man's interests just as well as his own. It is the man whose mind his own advantage does not blind nor cloud for an instant; who could sit a judge upon a question between himself and his neighbour, just as safely as the purest magistrate upon the bench of justice. Ah! how much richer than ermine—how far nobler than the train of magisterial authority—how more awful than the guarded bench of majesty, is that simple, magnanimous, and majestic truth! Yes, it is the man who is true—true to himself, his neighbour, and his God—true to the right—true to his conscience—and who feels that the slightest suggestion of that conscience is more to him than the chance of acquiring a hundred estates."

This is no fancy-portrait, no ideal character: thank God, the writer has the privilege of knowing many such among our merchants, manufacturers, and traders; and it is for this reason that he can view with satisfaction the commercial prosperity of Britain, without fearing for his country the fate of Tyre and Carthage.

CHAPTER V.

GRECIAN CIVILIZATION.

No fact in the history of civilization is more striking, and none more difficult to be completely explained, than the immense superiority of Europe over the other quarters of the globe. In the multitude, variety, and beauty of their natural productions, Asia and Africa far surpass Europe; and the spontaneous harvests of America, though not so rich as the others, are still without a rival between the Uralian chain and the Atlantic. No groves of native spices; no natural orchards laden with rich fruit; no fields of self-sown maize; no uncultivated aromatic herbs, are produced in our division of the earth:

> Man is the nobler growth our realms supply,
> And souls are ripened in our Northern sky.

In every thing which man invents, shapes, or fashions; in the exertions of the mind, and in the cunning of the hand, Europe is, and, since the earliest age of positive history, has been, as far beyond Asia, as it is below that region in natural fertility and beauty. Domestic life in Europe is based on the sanctity of marriage, and on the union of two persons. Nowhere in ancient or modern Europe has prostitution been legalized, or polygamy been sanctioned by positive law. Even among the Turks, an Asiatic horde who have only "encamped in Europe," the contact with the original

nations has greatly weakened those elements of barbarism, and imposed restrictions, which, to the mass of the people, act as a prohibition. Slavery existed in Europe as it does in Asia; but from the remotest ages Europeans have been found who protested against its injustice, and in European codes of law it has been tolerated rather than sanctioned. We may find in Asia, and even in Africa, some traces of efforts made to frame constitutions, and establish jural relations between the government, society, and individuals; but in Europe alone did the germ of political freedom unfold itself, strike its roots deep, and extend its branches wide. To Asia we are indebted for the rudiments of mechanical art; perhaps also for the suggestions of the higher inventions—the art of printing, the use of gunpowder, and the mariner's compass; but the development of these arts, the perfecting of these inventions, belong exclusively to Europeans. Compare the best spindles and looms of the Hindoos with the machinery of a Manchester mill; contrast a Chinese Gazette with the Times* or the Morning Chronicle; and observe the difference between a Chinese junk and a steam-packet, or a British man-of-war. In the fine arts, in literature, in science, and in philosophy, the superiority of Europe is still more decisive: no one ever dreamed of comparing

* While writing this sentence the author has got from the news-agent the singular phenomenon of a quadruple Times. Size is not the only wonder: the variety of talent displayed in the articles, the immense mass of information accumulated and digested, the extraordinary skill, combined with the exquisite simplicity of the arrangement, render this production almost a miracle of art and intellect. It is, however, perplexing to receive as a daily paper what would seemingly take a week to read.

Asiatic statuary with the sculpture of Chantrey or Canova; the Hindoo epics with the works of Homer or Milton; or the speculations of Eastern sages with the writings of Locke and Bacon. Europe derived the elements of civilization from the East, but now the most consoling prospect for humanity is, that Asia will abandon its ancient systems, and receive the civilization of Europe.

It is obvious that this superiority is the result, not of natural advantages, not of physical force, but of intelligence alone. The question then arises — What caused this great intellectual superiority? and to this it is not easy to give a satisfactory answer. The fact itself is so extensive and so complicated, that its causes are likely to be many and various. One cause, however, seems too prominent to be omitted — it is, that when Nature denied to Europe a soil rich in spontaneous productions, she gave fields that invited to tillage, and rewarded the labours of cultivation.

Greece was undoubtedly the first European country in which civilization acquired such strength as to form a system. The early traditions of the Greeks unanimously ascribe the introduction of the first elements of improvement to Asiatic colonies; and though these traditions have been impugned by modern scepticisms, they are too consistent with each other, and with the best authenticated facts of history, to be rejected for the sake of conjecture and hypothesis. The Greeks assert that they derived the use of letters from the Phœnician Cadmus, and the names of these letters attest their eastern origin. They tell us that the institution of marriage was introduced by the Egyptian

Cecrops; and Pelops of Lydia, effected such a revolution in the Apian land, as to give his name to the entire peninsula. But anterior to these, there was an immigration of even greater importance, the remembrance of which is vaguely preserved in mythology—a colony from some unknown region taught the art of agriculture. The Eleusinian mysteries, unquestionably derived from the oldest forms of the Grecian religion, shew what great importance was justly attributed to the introduction of the Cerealia. It is remarkable that the same tradition which described the goddess Ceres as the inventor of tillage, also represented her as the author of law; thus Ovid:

> First Ceres taught the labouring hind to plough
> The pregnant earth, and quickening seed to sow.
> She first for man did wholesome food provide,
> And with just laws the wicked world supplied:
> All good from her's derived, to her belong
> The grateful tribute of the Muse's song;
> Her more than worthy of our verse we deem,
> O, were our verse more worthy of the theme!*

It is not necessary to inquire whether Ceres was a mere personification, or a deified individual;† the legend shews that the unvarying tradition of the Greeks connected the origin of civil society with the first cultivation of corn, and further that they attributed both to an external source. We have seen in a former chapter that the Egyptians held agriculture in the highest honour; and if any credit can be given to the authority of Plutarch and Diodorus Siculus, Isis was worshipped in

* Garth's Translation, Book v.

† The name is most probably derived from the Hebrew word *Geresh*, which, in the Semitic languages, signifies "an ear of corn."

Egypt with the same ceremonies, and for the same reasons, that Ceres was venerated in Greece.

If we can suppose two races of men to start with the same stock of civilization, of which one should cultivate the earth, while the other lived on its spontaneous produce, whether animal or vegetable, it is easy to see that the former must make a great advance, and that the latter may become stationary, or even retrograde. The notion of property must be early developed among an agricultural people; the division of the soil is rendered necessary, and the cultivation of other branches of industry connected with tillage, is immediately suggested. The fact that natural productions become so altered by cultivation as to lose their original characteristics, is an incentive both to industry and ingenuity. We do not know what was the original type of wheat, oats, or barley; but we may reasonably conjecture from this very ignorance, that the Cerealia in their wild state were not well suited to human sustenance. It is, however, clear, that to produce the alteration, and still more to perpetuate it, required continued exercise of skill and industry.

Europe is throughout, save where local obstacles interfere, susceptible of agriculture; and it is not for the most part suited to the chase or pasturage. Its inhabitants could not become nomade: Nature herself forced them to adopt those habits of regular industry which are the basis of all social improvement and all social happiness. To this cause, as one out of many, may the moral superiority of Europeans over Asiatics be in a great degree attributed.

Greece, both from its vicinity to the civilized countries

of Asia, and from the advantages of its geographical position, seemed designed by nature to become the cradle of European civilization. Sufficiently fertile to reward toil, it was not so prolific as to support idleness. Varied in its character, it did not stimulate its inhabitants to one branch of industry alone, it invited the cultivation of all. One district was best suited to produce wine, another oil, and a third corn: Arcadia supplied pasturage for cattle; Thessaly was proud of its horses; the coast, indented with numerous bays and harbours, afforded every facility to navigation and commerce: Greece was not exclusively agricultural, pastoral, or commercial, but it was all three together. The very nature of the country not only invited to industry, but immediately suggested the exchange of commodities. In the Asiatic nations, we have seen that a principle of exclusiveness is very prominent in all their institutions: the Egyptian agriculturists were excluded from commerce, the Tyrian merchants never cultivated the soil, and sedentary pursuits were odious to the Persian nomades. But in Greece such exclusiveness was impracticable, and the variety of pursuits in active life rendered it necessary to acquire many kinds of knowledge, and thus laid a broad basis for farther improvement.

We have seen in a former chapter, that the Grecian religion differed from that of the Asiatics, in attributing human forms and features to its deities, and noticed the great influence of the change in engaging human affections on the side of devotion. The alteration is ascribed by Herodotus to the epic poets in the following remarkable words: — "Whence each of the gods is

descended, whether they have always existed, and what were their shapes, all this the Greeks have but recently known. Hesiod and Homer, whom I do not esteem more than four hundred years earlier than myself, are the poets who invented for the Greeks their theogony, gave the gods their titles, fixed their ranks and occupations, and described their forms. The poets who are said to have flourished before these, lived, as I believe, after them."

This assertion does not necessarily imply that Homer created the popular belief, but rather that he gave a poetic form to existing legends, and reduced the vague traditions of the nation to something like a system. There still remains, therefore, a difficult question: how did it happen that these traditions admitted of such a form as they received from Homer; in other words, how were the Greeks prepared to receive a religion, which, unlike the other existing systems of Paganism, rested mainly on the sympathy between deity and humanity? Why were the gods of the Greeks, friends to be won, while those of the Asiatics were enemies to be propitiated? Many causes seem to have contributed to this result, and not the least was the geographical position of Greece. The country was separated and cut in pieces by so many natural divisions that it was not easy for one district to obtain supremacy over the rest, and hence nothing like Asiatic despotism could ever be established in its precincts. Chiefs and heroes were reverenced, but there never was a monarch to be adored. It is a matter of dispute whether the deification of mortals, or the personification of physical powers, was the first form of idolatry; but there is no doubt that

both were very soon combined: oriental flattery not only compared the sovereign to the sun, but, as in the case of the Pharaohs and Cyrus, gave him the name of that luminary. Greece had heroes who merited canonization for merits both in peace and war; there were some who introduced useful arts of life, taught how to cultivate the vine or the olive, and to domesticate the horse; there were others who delivered the sea from pirates and the land from robbers, and deification was ceded to them more justly than to the Asiatic conqueror of empires.

The limited sphere of his operations brought the Grecian hero into immediate contact with the people; the Orientals heard of the glorious triumphs of their sovereign, the Greeks saw and felt the benefits conferred by an heroic chieftain. The feeling produced by such familiarity in life, extended itself beyond the grave—personal affection and gratitude entered into the worship of deified heroes; their very failings, which were not forgotten in tradition, brought them closer to humanity, and increased the feelings of companionship. Horace, in a well-known compliment to Augustus, mentions the benefits for which heroes were raised to the rank of gods:

> Rome's founder, Leda's twins, the god of wine,
> Were for their virtues raised to power divine;
> While they with pious care improved mankind,
> To various states their proper bounds assign'd;
> Commanded war's destroying rage to cease,
> And bless'd their cities with the arts of peace. *

If then we suppose that the Grecian system of idolatry, like that of all other ancient nations, was partly a

* Horace, Epistles, ii. 2.

personification of natural powers, and partly a deification of heroes, the change, effected by Homer, was, that he attached himself almost exclusively to the latter element, which was the best suited to the purposes of poetry, and probably the most in accordance with the popular inclinations.

It would lead us too far into learned disquisition, were we to investigate the probability of some religious change having been effected by the political revolution which was accomplished when the Hellenic race triumphed over the Pelasgic, as seems to be intimated in the legend of the war between the gods and the Titans; it is of more importance to note another peculiarity in the Grecian creed, namely, that human frailties, as well as human feelings, were attributed to the gods.* The Greeks did not exhibit their divinities as models of virtue, and they thus lost the greatest advantage that could have been derived from investing them with the attributes of humanity. Faults and crimes were ascribed to the objects of worship; and though these produced no great effect as misleading examples—for the stones were even by the vulgar regarded as poetical fictions—yet the effect of a guiding example was wanting; and in no respect does Christianity so transcendently surpass every system of religion devised by human reason, than in its combining the two great objects to which we have alluded—bringing the Divine attributes down to the level of human capacity, and raising man,

* "The religion of the Greeks," says Barthelemy, "was a confused mixture of truths and falsehoods, of venerable traditions and agreeable fictions; a system that flattered the senses and offended the understanding, which breathed only pleasure, while it taught and applauded virtue."—*Travels of Anacharsis*, vol. i. 183.

by the influence of a divine example, to aim at superhuman excellence.

"We may proceed with due reverence," says Archbishop Whately, "to inquire for what purpose we are taught by Scripture to believe in the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, and to regard *that* as a manifestation of God to his creatures. We shall find good reason for concluding, that it was designed, in part at least, for the purpose of leading men both to piety and morality, by a method admirably suited to the purpose, and which is absolutely peculiar to Christianity: viz. by first bringing down to the level of our capacity the moral attributes of the Deity, and thus better engaging our affections on the side of devotion; and secondly, by exhibiting a perfect and exalted model of human excellence. Both these objects are effected by the mysterious union of the divine and human natures: the divine *Word was made flesh,* to lead us to affectionate piety; and *the manhood was taken into God,* to teach us godlike virtue."*

But the Grecian belief in the frailty of the deities necessarily suggested the notion of their flexibility and good-nature. They were supposed to be won by the same entreaties that would prevail upon a friend, and conciliated by the same gifts that would please a companion. Homer frequently refers to this attribute, and contrasts it with the sternness of the infernal deities:

> Pluto, the grisly god who never spares,
> Who knows no mercy, and who hears no prayers,
> Lives dark and dreadful in deep hell's abodes,
> And men detest him as the worst of gods.†

* Whately, on the Peculiarities. Essay ii. 157.

† Iliad, ix.

From the time that these feelings mingled with the religion of Greece, human sacrifices were at an end, and their worship assumed that mild and joyous form which rendered the religious festivals so indescribably dear to the people.

The notions of a future state, and of retribution for the actions of this life in another form of existence, were vague and indistinct amongst the Greeks, but they were still influential on life and conduct. "If," says Mr. Mitchell, "the hand of an interpolator has been busy with the following fragment, still it no doubt speaks the feelings of the wiser and better minds of antiquity:"

Think not, Niceratus, that they
Whose life has been one holiday of revel,
Die to compound them with the senseless clod,
Safe, and for ever, from the gaze of heaven.
No, no; there is an Eye (and justice claims it)
Whose scrutinizing ken nought may elude.
Death hath its double path: this for the good,
That for the base to tread. Were it not so,
But one event came uniform to both.
"Up and be doing," I would bid thee; "pluck from
Curb'd knavery, the muzzle of restraint;
Filch, plunder, steal; or, pettier gains forsworn,
Betake thee to the agitator's trade,
And reap the harvest of a wholesale guilt."
Be not deceived: death hath its solemn courts,
Where he presides—whose name—holy and fearful—
Seals and shuts close the mouth of guarded reverence;
And life, though running to extremest verge,
Is but a larger date allowed the criminal
To meet that day of awful retribution.

Fragments of Philemon *

But this important article of religious faith was not

* Mitchell's Acharnenses, p. 151.

so positive in the Grecian mind as to become by itself a motive for action: it always had the mistiness and uncertainty of its poetic origin around it; and we may fairly describe the influence of the doctrine of the soul's immortality in Greece, as of great value in cheering the good, but of little force in deterring the evil.

From what we have said, it is evident that poetry had a considerable share in moulding and forming the Grecian mind, and we are not therefore surprised to find that poetry began to be regarded as an affair of state. Legislators and monarchs laid claim to celebrity for having preserved the poems of Homer; kings and states sought to have their names immortalized by the lyric bards; and the Athenians so reverenced the drama, that they would not allow the theatrical fund to be touched for purposes of national defence. In Grecian civilization there arose from the influence of poetry, and from eloquence, which may be regarded as the daughter of poetry, a disproportion between the power exercised by the imagination and the judgment: the former prompted to enjoyment and inspired hopes, when the latter demanded sacrifices and suggested fears; a cooler people than the Greeks would not have credited the piety of Philip when he undertook the Social war, and would have disbelieved the generosity of the Romans when they proclaimed the independence of the states at the Olympic games.

If within the geographical limits of Greece we may find almost every variety of soil and climate, so in its history we may discover almost every form of civil government, except perhaps the representative. In all these varieties, however, we find one common and erro-

neous principle; namely, that an individual has rights only so far as he is a member of the state. The simple question in all their revolutions was, "who shall govern?" not "within what limits shall governing power be exercised?" Aristotle says that the political constitutions of Greece had been established in the following order:—"Monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, tyranny, democracy;" but in all of these it was received as an axiom, that the supreme power, wherever lodged, was absolute; in short, every constitution, whatever might be its internal form, was despotic over those by or for whom it was created. In modern times, publicists deny the power of a nation to resign the rights of those who compose it; no one believes that the British constitution could be abolished by act of parliament.

This exclusive attention to the power of the state, and the neglect of what may be called the natural rights of man, appears to have arisen from the small size of the Grecian communities. These were for the most part cities with their adjacent districts, so that the ideas of state and city were designated by the same name. The experience of all municipalities, ancient and modern, shews that there is a tendency in corporations to sacrifice individual rights to the interests of the corporate body; and this tendency is not much altered by the nature of the constitution of that body: it is manifest both in close and in open corporations; and hence Lord Coke whimsically remarked, that "Corporations are without souls." In consequence of this principle the form of the constitution was of infinitely more importance in Greece than it can possibly be in any modern nation; each individual felt that he must either

be a member of the corporate body, or nothing. The struggle between the aristocracy and the democracy was not a contest for freedom, it was at once a battle for power and for constitutional existence. Political freedom not only involved the idea of political power, but was identified with it; and that power was unrestricted, whether it was lodged in the hands of prince, nobles, or people. In examining Grecian politics, it must be remembered that a Greek democracy was a despotism, and that none of its members shrunk from the avowal.

In the ordinary progress of society, the rights of the commons gradually and necessarily acquire strength, whatever may be the nature of the aristocracy opposed to them.* The great crisis in the history of every nation, is the period when the commons demand their constitutional recognition as a body in the state; for though the natural progress of wealth and civilization leads to such a result, yet the process of adjustment is one of great niceness and difficulty—any perturbing causes will inevitably produce collision.

In Greece, the old aristocratical monarchies were at first succeeded by despotisms in most of the states; but their rule was of short duration, for the tyrant of a single town was easily overthrown. Under favourable circumstances, the ascendency of wealth, after this brief crisis, naturally and easily took the place of the ascen-

* See Appendix ii. to vol. i. of Arnold's Thucydides. I cannot refer to this admirable essay without earnestly recommending its diligent perusal to my readers: it is the best specimen of the Philosophy of History our language affords, and those who make themselves masters of its principles will have obtained a key to the solution of the most perplexing problems in ancient and modern policy.

dency of birth. But at this period anything that retarded or anything that unduly accelerated the revolution was equally to be dreaded. It would not be easy to determine whether a victorious ascendency or a triumphant populace is most to be dreaded; whether the cold-blooded, systematic cruelty of an irritated oligarchy, or the mad excesses of an infuriate mob, works more mischief to humanity. "Spring," says Dr. Arnold, "is ever a critical period, and the fairest promise of blossom on the healthiest tree may be cut off by one of the sudden frosts or storms so incident to that changeful season. In the political spring also there are peculiar dangers, internal and external, which in too large a proportion of instances have never allowed the blossom to ripen." From a variety of causes, but principally from an original difference of race, perpetuated by institutions, this crisis was accelerated in Athens, and was more fatally retarded in Sparta. The difference between the Ionic and Doric races runs through the whole of Grecian history, and to it may be mainly ascribed the deep-rooted hatred between Athens and Sparta, which eventually led to the ruin of both. It is usual to ascribe their respective peculiarities to original difference of race; but it seems unnecessary to have recourse to incomprehensible mystery, when these results can be traced to obvious circumstances of position.

The Ionians were a mercantile and commercial people; Attica, great part of Eubœa, several of the islands in the Archipelago, several colonies in Sicily and Southern Italy, and far the most flourishing cities on the coast of Asia Minor, were tenanted by that race. The spirit of

naval and commercial enterprise was a powerful counterpoise to the spirit of chivalry which gave strength to the ancient aristocracy, and wealth acquired by trade overbalanced the influences derived from the possession of landed estates. "Well might the aristocracy of Sparta," says Dr. Arnold, "dread the introduction of foreign manners, and complain that intercourse with foreigners would corrupt their citizens and seduce them to forsake the institutions of their fathers. Injustice and ignorance must fail, if the light be fairly let in upon them; evil can only be fully enjoyed by those who have never tasted good. The sea deserved to be hated by the old aristocracies, inasmuch as it has been the mightiest instrument in the civilization of mankind. In the depth of winter, when the sky is covered with clouds, and the land presents one cold, blank, lifeless surface of snow, how refreshing is it to the spirits to walk upon the shore, and to enjoy the eternal freshness and liveliness of ocean! Even so in the deepest winter of the human race, when the earth was but one chilling expanse of inactivity, life was stirring in the waters. There began that spirit, whose genial influence has now reached to the land, has broken the chains of winter, and covered the face of the earth with beauty."*

The Ionian constitutions, from the simple influence of commerce, developed fully the rights of individuals to become component parts of the state, but they did not define the relations of the individual in his character of subject to that state. Having made a citizen a part of the ruling body, no ancient publicist seems to have thought of him in the character of a person

* Arnold's Thucydides, vol. i. p. 638.

ruled.* Now, this omission, which we find in all the governments of ancient times, is a decisive proof that "the social compact," — an actual agreement made at some definite period between human beings, who would otherwise run wild and harm each other,—is an utterly gratuitous supposition; for it shews us that ancient states were founded, not on distrust, but on such a degree of confidence, arising from previous experience of society, that individual rights were forgotten, or at least were deemed to be sufficiently secured by perfecting the form of the state.

Absolute power, unchecked by institutions, and immediatised (if such an expression be allowable), is not only liable to abuse, but is most certain to be abused. There is no check to the impulses, to which communities are not less liable than individuals; the legislative and the executive powers are combined; the law and the sentence are pronounced together. "Comparing democratic and monarchic despotism," says Lieber, "we shall find that the latter must needs rest its power somewhere without the monarch himself; for, as has been several times observed, the monarch has personally no more power than the meanest of the crowd. He must be supported by opinion without him; but democratic absolutism is power itself—it is a reality—fear-

* The gigantic mind of Aristotle seems in this, as in many other important matters, to have caught glimpses of a truth not developed in his times. In his Politics, book iii., chap. vii., he distinctly shews that states ought to be classed according to the object of their government—the welfare of the whole, or of a part of the community—and not according to the numbers who participate in the administration. In the same passage also he discriminates between justice and equality, by introducing the consideration of individual rights.

fully sweeping power. It is a real power, a torrent which nothing can stem. If an individual opposes monarchical absolutism, there is something heroic in it in the minds of the people; if a man opposes democratic absolutism, he is at once considered a heretic, a traitor to the commonweal."

A king-people is just as likely to be led astray by base courtiers, as a dominant aristocracy or an absolute monarch. "Demagogues are but courtiers, though the court dress of the one may consist in the soiled handkerchief of a Marat, that of the other in silk and hair-powder." Monarchs have sacrificed their best and bravest subjects to their flatterers; republics have done the same to their orators.

Athenian history has so often been an arena for the discussion of modern politics, that it was of some importance to shew the inapplicability of the precedent. Enough has been said to prove that absolutism and not freedom, was the vice of the Athenian constitution; it remains to examine whether this absolutism cannot be traced to the perturbing causes which unnaturally accelerated the transition from the ascendency of the landed aristocracy to that of the aristocracy of wealth.

The brunt of the Persian invasion fell on Attica; its fields were wasted, its groves cut down, its city burned to the ground. "Athens existed only in the hearts of its citizens." Common calamity generates feelings of equality more rapidly than common prosperity, for misery is more uniform than happiness; and the Persians also had reduced the landed proprietors far more than the merchants, because moveable property had been saved by the ships. In Athens, when restored.

the government became at once democratical, for no other form was possible: but the landed aristocracy did not lose the memory of their former greatness; and during the greater part of the following century were willing to purchase the recovery of their ascendency by sacrificing the independence of their country. Scarcely had the Long Walls been finished, when the aristocratic malcontents invited the Lacedæmonians to invade Attica, but found themselves too weak to attempt a revolt.

When Athens was entrusted with the management of the maritime war against Persia, the power of the democratic party was not less increased than that of the state itself. The sailors in the several fleets did not serve under hereditary chieftains, but under captains appointed by the state, of which they were a part, and hence they could scarcely comprehend the claims to power made by the ancient nobility. The gradual progress of commerce would have absorbed the landed aristocracy, and probably directed its members to seek political power by the acquisition of mercantile wealth; but the more violent operations of a naval war suddenly transferred political power to the democracy, without destroying the aristocracy as a party. The supremacy which Athens received by the voluntary agreement of the allies, was the source of the republic's greatness and splendour; it is not wonderful therefore, that it was retained after the original objects of the confederacy had been gained. There are examples of empire resigned by individuals, but a people has never voluntarily yielded its authority over a subject nation. No war was more popular in the beginning than the first American war, for the meanest peasant in England

27564

believed that he derived dignity from speaking of *our* American colonies.

It cannot be denied that the Athenian democracy abused its absolutism, and that the Athenian state made an unjust use of its supremacy over the allies; and thus viewed, there is some truth in the assertion of Isocrates, that the dominion of the sea was the source of all the misery of Athens and Greece. But it is not fair to confine our views to the abuse: what form of government, or what state, ever effected so much in the same space of time for humanity as Athens and its democracy, during the brief period of their meridian glory? Pericles, Phidias, Polygnotus, Sophocles, Socrates, Plato, Demosthenes, were the children of the democracy; and truly great must the public spirit of that nation have been, which could foster, encourage, and develope the genius capable of achieving their mighty deeds. We do not disguise the abuses, the consequences of which were most fatal to Athens herself, but we protest against making the abuses the sole criterion of our judgment; especially as these abuses mainly resulted from extrinsic causes, of which the demoralizing influence of war was the greatest and the worst.

Democratic absolutism in Athens ran its natural course to anarchy. The antagonizing principle—the Spartan oligarchy—led to still more fatal results. Anarchy at the worst can only be a temporary evil, but the wounds inflicted by selfish tyranny are deep and incurable. The Spartan constitution was an aristocracy of conquest, and the whole aim of its legislation was to maintain the conquering race in its distinct and

exclusive ascendency. The Dorians, who settled in Laconia, like the Turks in Europe, were an army of occupation; and hence the character of the Spartan institutions was "more suited to a beleaguered garrison than to men united for mutual benefit in civil society." In order to preserve the Spartan race pure, intermarriage with the conquered and enslaved people was strictly forbidden: to maintain the ascendency of the dominant race, all the labours of the field, and all the toils necessary for the support of life, were thrown upon the descendants of the vanquished. The Spartan was a soldier, and nothing more: he was taught to regard trade as disgraceful, and literature as unmanly; the only pursuits worthy of his care were war and martial exercises. "The Spartans," says Mr. Mitchell, "were a nation of gentlemen." This is true, if the absence of all useful occupation be sufficient to constitute a gentleman; but we deem that something more is wanting to such a character than merely living on the labour of others, and *that* "something more" is not to be found in the history of the Spartans. Patriotism, the virtue most commonly ascribed to them, was that to which they had the best claim, for the Spartans were not a nation, but an oligarchy in a nation; their heroism was exerted for a party, not for a people. Viewed in this light, the disregard of self so often displayed by the Spartan warrior loses much of its merit, for we cannot accord to partizans the honour we bestow on patriots.

"The principle of the ascendency of noble blood," says Dr. Arnold, "necessarily marks the infancy of mankind; and wherever it has long continued to exist,

it marks a state of infancy unnaturally prolonged by the selfish policy or criminal neglect, of those who ought rather to have gradually trained it up to the independence of manhood." The institutions of Sparta were one and all designed to perpetuate this selfish ascendency, and no crime of public or private profligacy was prohibited which tended to strengthen the power of the dominant race. While the progress of the Commons was forced forward in Athens, it was still more unnaturally retarded, or rather altogether prevented in Sparta. Two states so circumstanced, when all the surrounding nations were in a state of progressive revolution, could not have avoided a collision, even if they were both disposed for peace. It was a revolutionary era: at one side was a republic, resolved to carry popular power to its farthest extreme; on the other a commonwealth, resolved to maintain the domination of the oligarchy in its most stern rigidity. War in its worst form, a war of principles, became inevitable; it is unnecessary to inquire which party provoked the contest, for both were hurried into it by circumstances beyond their control.

The Peloponnesian war disorganized the whole state of society in Greece; overthrew all sanctions of religion, morality, and natural affection; encouraged an atrocious and unscrupulous party spirit, which identified all virtue with an uncompromising zeal for the interests of its own faction, and openly expressed its abhorrence of impartial justice and enlarged patriotism. Aristophanes bears melancholy testimony to the demoralizing influences of this war in Athens, but in Sparta it was utterly ruinous to every thing that retained

the resemblance of public virtue. The ruin of the Athenian armaments in Scicily gave the victory to Sparta, but the supremacy of such a state rendered the peace more ruinous than the war. Sparta tried to retain her superiority by constituting selfish factions, like the oligarchy of the thirty tyrants, in every city over which she could exercise any influence: thus superadding the tyranny of faction to the bitterness of party-spirit. The third Peloponnesian war followed, and Sparta fell, never to rise again. Literature, science, and philosophy combined to shed a moon-light majesty over fallen Athens, imparting loveliness to her ruins, and embalming her memory by associating it with every thing sublime in conception and beautiful in execution: Sparta left the world nothing but an execrated memory and a dishonoured name.

The Peloponnesian war and the supremacy which Sparta acquired, demoralized Greece, chiefly by producing a spirit of party and faction more violent than perhaps ever existed before or since. The people was not less a faction than the oligarchy, and hence Aristotle was justified in classing absolute democracy among those states in which the government consults the influence of the few, not of the whole. It needs not to search very deep into history to find, that the spirit of faction once set loose, rapidly effects the ruin of states: Jerusalem, Constantinople, Venice, attest its pernicious influence not less than the cities of Greece.

An important consequence of the revolutionary war in Greece, for such the Peloponnesian contest was, has not received all the attention which it seems to merit; we mean, the decline of the national religion and its

gradual profanation. The Spartans, early in the war, set the example of disregarding the oracle of Delphi. Their seizure of the Cadmeia, or citadel of Thebes, in the midst of peace, was not less a violation of the national religion than a breach of national law; and finally, their secret encouragement of the Phocians to plunder the Delphic treasury, was the immediate cause of the ruin of Greece. But it would be useless to deny that the speculations of the Athenian philosophers effected more to weaken the devotional feelings of the Greeks, than the ostentatious impiety of the Spartans. A nation with a poetic religion must either abstain from philosophical speculation, or learn from philosophy that its religion is unfounded. This is particularly the case where religion is not connected with the state, or where the connexion between them is purely a voluntary association. There are, then, no authorized defenders of the national creed; and if accusations of impiety, as in the case of Socrates, are brought before a public tribunal, the accusers will be found to be more frequently actuated by personal motives than by respect for religion.

The license assumed by the comic poets must have weakened the national faith. No one who had enjoyed the ludicrous pictures of Hercules in the comedy of the Bird, or Bacchus in that of the Frogs, could ever afterwards think of those deities with reverence. But it is probable that the comedy of the Clouds, though designed to crush the asserted impiety of Socrates and his followers, really inflicted a severe injury on religion, by giving circulation and currency to blasphemies which would otherwise have been confined to the schools.

The Phocian war, which consummated the ruin that

the Peloponnesian wars had commenced, affords melancholy proof of the extent to which profanation had gradually arrived in Greece. The Spartans, as we have seen, were accessories before the fact to the plunder of the temple of Delphi, the Athenians and Corinthians became subsequently the allies of the sacrilegious Phocians. It is no doubt true, that the Thebans and Thessalians, in their first attack on the Phocians, used religion as a mere pretext to hide private malice; but the profanation of Delphi was an outrage to the national religion which would not have found defenders, if the religion itself had not previously sunk into neglect and decay.

The treasures stolen from Delphi, thrown suddenly into circulation, disorganized the currency in all the Grecian states; but it wrought a more fatal change, by rendering the employment of mercenary troops almost universal—a custom not less fatal to morality than it was to valour and patriotism. No states rested so much on morals as the Grecian, for none were more completely self-governed, both in legislation and administration. Private life was identified with public, law entered into every part of social and domestic existence. Hence moral corruption at once produced political degradation and anarchy. Two causes chiefly produced this demoralization,—war, and the spirit of faction, which, if not engendered, was fearfully aggravated by war. It was because he witnessed the growing corruption produced by war, that Aristophanes so strenuously recommended peace to his countrymen; but his exertions were vain; the war continued, until the fearful conception which he had placed before the eyes of his

countrymen—the demon of war pounding cities and states to atoms in a mortar,* was realized to its utmost

* This extraordinary passage is rendered lyrically by Mitchell. A specimen of the scene will explain its nature to the general reader.

SCENE—HEAVEN.

A great bowl, or mortar, is seen on the stage; leeks, garlic, and cheese —as emblems of Prasiæ, Megara, and Sicily, menaced with ruin by the course of the war—lie around it.

WAR—*slowly and solemnly.*

Laceration,
Maceration,
Grief and scorning,
Woe and mourning,
Past all curing;
I do scan,
Unto man,
The much enduring.
Aches and pains,
Rack his joints
And fire his brains.

TRYGÆUS.

Shield me, great Phœbus, 'tis indeed a mortar
Vast beyond vastness!—then this monster's visage!
Pain, mischief, misery, are upon his front.
And do my eyes indeed take witness of him,
The god whose very sight creates a solitude!
The truculent, the iron-faced, still settling
Upon his legs, as if for fight preparing.

WAR.

Double, double,
Woe and trouble,
Triple trine
And nine to nine,
Nine and ten,
And nine again,
I do see
For Prasiæ.
Hapless state!

See now thy doom is seal'd, and ratified thy fate.

extent, and Grecian glory was ended because Grecian virtue was no more.

But in this general ruin everything did not perish: the hope of regeneration was never wholly lost in Greece; and though trampled down by the Macedonians, yet a noble effort was made by the Achæan league, and thus "the splendid noon" of the greatness of Greece was followed by a still more splendid evening. Intellectual preeminence remained after political supremacy was destroyed; and Greece, though vanquished, won the respect and obtained the homage of her conquerors. Thus indestructible are the triumphs of mind, thus enduring the glory of having advanced civilization:

> Like the vase in which roses have once been distill'd,
> You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,
> But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.

CHAPTER VI.

ROMAN CIVILIZATION.

From the very imperfect records of the early history of Rome, it is scarcely possible to obtain a plausible account of the real origin of the state and city. It is, however, probable that the Roman, like the Spartan constitution, was primarily based on an aristocracy of conquest; and it is certain that it very early had assumed such a form, though not quite so rigidly and exclusively as the Spartan system. The Dorians, who conquered Laconia, were a single people; the military adventurers who established themselves on the banks of the Tiber, were a mixture of several races, like those who accompanied the Norman conqueror when he invaded England. In the Roman language two elements are very distinguishable; that is, a substratum of Greek, to which belong the grammatical inflections, the terms relating to agriculture and domestic life, and what we may generally call, the staple of the language: intermingled with this is the Oscan, to which belong most of the terms relating to arms, war, rule, and conquest. Hence it may reasonably be inferred that the Latins were a mixed people, arising from a conquest of the Pelasgians by the Oscans. It may further be inferred that the Pelasgians were the more civilized, and the Oscans the more warlike people; and it is probable that the latter were a race of mountaineers, who were

tempted to conquest by the wealth of those who lived in the plains.* There is no difficulty in the fact that the Oscans soon abandoned their original name; in less than a century after the Norman conquest, the name of Norman had fallen into disuse, though the difference of language still remained, and as Sir Walter Scott has shewn, this difference in our existing mixed tongue still marks the circumstances of the conquest.†

Whether the Sabines, who joined the Romans either when the city was founded, or immediately after, be-

* Virgil describes the aborigines as mountain-tribes civilized by Saturn:—

A race untaught, and bred on mountains wild,
Awed by his wholesome laws, became more mild.

† The passage to which I allude occurs in Ivanhoe; and though one of the most humorous in the romance, contains in it a very curious and important philological dissertation.

"Truly, Gurth," said Wamba, "I advise thee to call off Fangs, and leave the herd to their destiny, which, whether they meet with bands of travelling soldiers or of outlaws, or of wandering pilgrims, can be little else than to be converted into Normans before morning, to thy no small ease and comfort."

"The swine turned to Normans to my comfort!" quoth Gurth; "expound that to me, Wamba, for my brain is too dull, and my mind too vexed, to read riddles."

"Why, how call you those grunting brutes running about on four legs?" demanded Wamba.

"Swine, fool, swine," said the herd, "every fool knows that."

"And swine is good Saxon," said the jester; "but how call you the sow when she is flayed, and drawn and quartered, and hung up by the heels like a traitor?"

"Pork," answered the swineherd.

"I am very glad that every fool knows that, too," said Wamba; "and pork, I think, is good Norman-French; and so when the brute lives and is in the charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name; but becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when she is carried to the castle-hall to feast among the nobles."—*Ivanhoe*, vol. i. 14.

longed to the Oscan race or not, is a question we cannot solve; many circumstances render it probable that they did, and particularly the few fragments of the Sabine language which have been preserved. But a third element in the Roman state, belonged to a race alien to the Latin "in language, religion, and blood," and this was obtained from the Etrurians or Tuscans, whose religious institutions and usages made a deep and lasting imprint on those of Rome. But the Tuscans themselves, were a mixed people, formed like the Latins from a conquering race of Etruscans and a conquered race of Tyrrhenian Pelasgians; though in their language, from some unknown cause, the Greek element was almost obliterated. It is singular that the Etrurians left no trace of their language in that of Rome, though they so extensively influenced its religious and political institutions; but in a somewhat analogous case, we find the Romish Church giving ecclesiastical constitutions and a body of civil law to the Teutonic nations, without producing any very marked effect on their languages.*

The Roman religion differed from that of Greece in the character of its deities, in the nature of its priesthood, and in the object of its festivals; and as the national religion was among the Romans, during the

* Dr. Arnold's History of Rome contains the best, and almost the only satisfactory account of the origin of the Romans that has yet been published in any country. I regret that he has not extended his analysis to the Roman religion, which furnishes abundant evidence of the justness of his views, and opens an almost untouched field for his unrivalled powers of historical criticism. I have availed myself of Benjamin Constant's work on Roman Polytheism, but I have not marked the references, for I have scarcely taken a statement which I did not find it necessary to modify.

greater part of their history, the centre and soul of their system of civilization, it is necessary that we should examine these differences closely and attentively.

"The Romans," says Dionysius of Halicarnassus, "reject from their religion, as fabulous, everything that is indecent or immoral. The tales of Cœlus mutilated by his sons,—of Saturn devouring his offspring,—of Ceres wandering over the earth,—of the rape of Proserpine,—the battles, the wounds, and the intrigues of the gods, have no place in the Roman polytheism. The fictions of this nature, transmitted to us Greeks by our ancestors, and which contain records of scandalous and criminal deeds, were rejected by Romulus as guilty legends. He engaged his subjects to think and speak honourably of the gods, without attributing to them anything inconsistent with their beneficent nature. Hence, everything connected with the worship of gods is transacted in Rome with more piety and circumspection than amongst the Greeks and barbarians."*

The Romans identified their principal deities with those of Greece, but their Jupiter was a being farther remote from humanity than the Grecian Zeus; their Consus, or Neptune, was more the deity that inspired good counsel, than the God who ruled over the waters; and though Lancus was declared to be the same as Hercules, he was honoured more for enforcing the sanctity of oaths than for his accomplishment of the twelve labours. It must also be observed, that this identification of the Grecian with the Roman deities, took place at a late period in the history of the republic, and was altogether the work of the poets, who, abandoning all

* Dion. Halicar. ii. 1.

claims to originality, made it the chief object of their ambition to transfer the beautiful fictions of Greece into Latium.

It would be a serious error to judge of the Roman religion from the Roman poets, as we do of the Greek religion from the Greek poets. Roman literature was an exotic; there was scarcely one poet among the Latins who could properly be called national. They studied the Greek mythology, not because they believed in it, but because they thought it available for poetical purposes. Hence Virgil's fictions are much tamer than those of Homer: they want the animating power of faith. But the mixture of the two mythologies, made by the poets, is not the only difficulty in tracing the divinities of ancient Latium; the priests made it a rule to conceal the real names of some of the principal deities, and when the fashion of giving them Greek names and attributes prevailed, their original designations and their proper functions were confounded and forgotten. In Ovid's Fasti, we find Janus represented as inferior to Juno, and soon after described as the most ancient of the gods, who claims the first share in all devotions and sacrifices.

The ancient Latin religion was more elementary and symbolical than that of the Greeks. We find the human form abandoned in some deities. The god Zerminus was merely an unshapen stone, a natural pillar, such as seems to have been worshipped in most pagan nations.* This deity presided over the sanctity of

* The reader will be reminded of the stone pillars venerated by the Druids, and of the misshapen rocks honoured with worship in several parts of the East. I find from Herodian that the temple of Emesa

landmarks, the rights of property, and the increase of the republic. But the symbolical character of the Roman religion was more forcibly shewn in the personification and deification of abstract qualities. There were temples erected to Concord, to Piety, to Chastity, to Good Faith, to Manly Fortune,* and to Connubial Piety.† These moral attributes could scarcely be regarded as persons; and the custom of worshipping abstractions produced greater reverence, but less affection for the deities than existed among the Greeks.

The rural deities of the Romans were more numerous and more honoured than those of the Greeks: it might almost be said, that the early Latin mythology was identified with agriculture. Romulus instituted a college of twelve rural sacrifices, and became a member himself. The statues of Seja, the goddess of sowing, and Segeta, the goddess of reaping, were standing in the Circus so late as the time of Pliny. On the other hand, most of the deities in the Greek polytheism were warriors; and even those whose functions seemed to qualify them least for war, such as Pallas and Aphroditè, were described by Homer as joining in the battle. Now, agriculture certainly is more calculated to inspire

in Syria, consecrated to the sun, under the name of Elaiagabalus, contained one of these pillars:—"In this temple there stands not any image made with hands, as among the Greeks and Romans, to represent the god; but there is a very large stone, round at the bottom, and terminating in a point of a conical form and of a black colour, which they pretend fell down from Jupiter." (*Herod.* v. 5.) It was probably an ærolithe.

* *Fors Fortuna*, perhaps the superiority of talent. It was connected with the worship of Venus Vesticordia, the goddess of connubial purity.

† Pausanias mentions similar personifications in Greece, but they were probably of a very late age.

notions of utility, justice, and moderation than military life, and hence we are disposed to conclude that the worship of the rural deities among the Romans exercised a greater and more beneficial influence on the morality of their religion than is generally suspected.*

From this account of the Roman religion, it might be reasonably expected that the priesthood would be a very different institution from what it was in Greece. In Rome, the hierarchy was a constituted and corporate body; in Greece, a hierarchy could scarcely be said to exist. But the hierarchy was not only a corporation, it was to a great extent a caste; for the exclusive right of the patricians to take the auspices, that is, to perform the religious ceremonies necessary to the commencement of any public business, was the chief means by which that body was so long enabled to maintain its stand against the just claims of the plebeians.

There can be little doubt that the Romans derived their corporate and hereditary system of priesthood from the Etruscans. In both nations it was the great bulwark of the aristocracy, and in Rome it was the last privilege which the nobles resigned. The influence of the principle is manifest in every page of Livy's history. The debates on the repeal of the law prohibiting the

* In the hymn to the Fratres Arvales, which is the oldest specimen of the Latin language, Mars himself is invoked as a rural deity. It is thus translated by Dunlop:

> Ye Lares, aid us! Mars, thou god of might,
> From murrain shield the flocks,—the flowers from blight.
> For thee, O Mars! a feast shall be prepared;
> Salt, and a wether chosen from the herd:
> Invite by turns each demi-god of spring.
> Great Mars, assist us! Triumph, triumph, sing!

intermarriage of patricians and plebeians, exhibit the former expressing their horror at the intrusion of the commons into the rites and ceremonies of religion; and when the law was extorted from the reluctant nobles, we find the senate taking advantage of public calamities —a defeat of the army, a plague or a pestilence—to propose a return to the old constitution, on the plea that plebeian magistrates rendered the rites over which they presided, ineffectual or displeasing to the gods.*

The priestly corporation in Rome was divided into two bodies, the college of pontiffs and the college of augurs. The former regulated all the externals of religion; they decided what ceremonies should be used in special sacrifices, and what works might be allowed on festivals and holidays; they superintended the conduct of the priests, and claimed a right of inspection over the civil dignities, which conferred the power of performing any act of public worship, or offering sacrifices. As the power of the commons increased, appeals began to be made from the pontiffs to the people, and the college rapidly lost its influence as a political body.

In the early ages of Roman history, the augurs were even more influential than the pontiffs; no important transaction, of war or peace, could be undertaken until they had declared that the auspices were favourable. They annulled the elections of magistrates, dictators, and consuls, whenever they discovered, or pretended to discover, any religious informality in the elections. They were to a great extent self-chosen, for there was a law forbidding the admission of any citizen into their

* Comitiis, auspicato quæ fierent, indignum Diis visum honores vulgari, discriminaque gentium confundi.—*Livy*, v. 14.

college who was suspected of enmity to one of the members. By the Ogulerian law, the augurate and pontificate were opened to the plebeians, but it appears that the right of election was long retained by the colleges.

Though civil functionaries in Rome were often called upon to perform religious duties, it was in their priestly and not in their magisterial capacity that they interfered. No one could take part in the ceremonies of public worship, who had not been regularly consecrated; and hence, in later times, every leading statesman took care to be enrolled in the college of pontiffs or of augurs. Religious sanctity was thus added to administrative authority; and the Plebeians shewed that they felt the value of the union, when they demanded that the Tribunate should be declared sacro-sanct.

It is conceded on all hands, that a portion, at least, of the ancient mythology had an astronomical origin; or, in other words, that the physical changes connected with the periodical motions of the sun, earth, and planets, were frequently symbolized in fable. It may be added, that many of these fables were well suited to inculcate the moral lessons to be deduced from the vicissitudes of the seasons, and particularly that of a superintending Providence. The Greeks, neglecting both the astronomy and the moral, extended the fables into poetic legends; the Romans, without wholly abandoning the astronomy, gave strength to the morality, by combining the fable with their history. A reference to the Fasti will shew, that far the greater number of the Roman festivals were connected with some real or imaginary event in their annals; and almost every temple and

every statue erected in Rome, was designed to perpetuate the memory of a great deliverance effected by the interference of the gods, or some remarkable victory ascribed to their favour. This peculiarity of the Roman religion added greatly to the permanence of the constitution and the efficacy of the laws, for every religious festival, and almost every ceremony, taught the citizens to know the history of their country, and to cherish its institutions; and hence the forms of law varied less in Rome than in any ancient republic.

The existence of the soul after death, and a future state of rewards and punishments, were ideas far more predominant in the Roman than in the Grecian religion. The Greeks were averse to any thing that inspired gloomy reflections, and they shunned the idea of death as much as possible. The Romans, thrice a year, celebrated a festival to the deities that presided over the souls of the departed; a mystic pit was dug, the *Mundus*, which was regarded as the door of the invisible world, and while it remained, no public business could be transacted, no vessel quitted the harbour, no marriage was celebrated; the business of life stood still in the presence of death.

Roman polytheism, by its severe strength, was a protection and guarantee to the constitution; it invested the forms and institutions of the state with invisible and mysterious sanctity; and, in one respect at least, surpassed all other forms of polytheism, by inspiring the deepest respect for oaths, promises, and plighted faith. The vengeance of the gods was a menace for every violation of natural right, and even Virgil superadds this motive to hospitality in one of the few passages where he ceases to be an imitator:

> Know if the force of human laws you slight,
> The gods, the gods, will all our wrongs requite:
> Vengeance is theirs, and theirs to guard the right.*

We have shewn that the ceremonial part of the Roman religion was derived from the Etruscans, and that the early regulations concerning the priesthood were admirably adapted to maintain the power of the aristocracy. "It is well known," says Dr. Arnold, "that the government in the cities of Etruria was an exclusive aristocracy, and that the commons, if in so wretched a condition they may be called by that honourable name, were like the mass of the people among the Sclavonic nations, the mere serfs or slaves of the nobility. This is a marked distinction between the Etruscans and the Sabine and Latin nations of Italy; and as in the constitution of Servius Tullius, a Latin spirit is discernible, so the tyranny which either in the shape of a monarchy or an aristocracy suspended that constitution for nearly two centuries, tended certainly to make Rome resemble the cities of Etruria, and may possibly be traced originally to that same revolution which expelled the Sabine gods from the capitol, and changed for ever the simple religion of the infancy of Rome."†

In all the struggles between the Patricians and the Plebeians, religion was a powerful aid to the former; because it was derived from a nation where the aristocracy had exclusive possession of everthing human and divine. So strong was this principle, that when the Plebeians first obtained the right of electing members of their own body to the military tribunate, they forbore to exercise that right, and elected Patricians.

* Ilioneus to Dido, Æneid i. † Arnold's Rome, i. 57.

Whether the Servian constitution was overthrown in a religious revolution may be doubted, but nothing is more certain than that its restoration was constantly opposed on religious grounds. The aristocratic party had a definite model of government, for the establishment of which they perpetually struggled, namely, the Etrurian aristocracy. The commons had an equally definite object, the Servian, or, as we may perhaps call it, the Latin constitution,* which gave the commons constitutional existence, and a share both in the legislative and executive power. It is not necessary to enter into the history of the struggles between those parties: it will be enough to record the fact, that whenever the people obtained the recognition of their rights, the state was triumphant abroad and prosperous at home; but whenever the aristocracy had usurped the rights it had conceded to the people, the arms of the republic were disgraced, and the city torn by internal dissensions. This will be found equally true, whether the aristocracy was purely of birth, as in the early ages of Rome, or a mixed aristocracy of birth and wealth, as in the later times of the republic. It must also be confessed, that the strong sense of the national religion, which pervaded all classes, and the great reverence for established institutions, rendered political struggles among the Romans less violent, and political revolutions less destructive of existing privi-

* It may be objected that Servius was of Etrurian birth; this, however, would not prevent his becoming the partisan of the Latin democracy. The legend declares that his mother was a slave: now in the relations of concubinage, the child follows the condition of the mother; so that Servius was personally interested in weakening the exclusive privileges of the aristocracy.

leges, than similar events were among the Greeks: the Patricians never reduced the Plebeians to the condition of the Helots in Sparta; the Commons never established such an absolute democracy as that which prevailed in Athens.

Privilege and liberty are often opposed to each other; but there is no real opposition between constitutional privilege and constitutional liberty; they may co-exist not only harmoniously, but beneficially, when both are limited and defined by law. "The most striking point in the character of the Romans," says Dr. Arnold, "was their love of institutions and of order, their reverence for law, their habit of considering the individual as living only for that society of which he was a member."* But it is of importance to observe, that individual rights are more regarded in a state where the government is mixed, where there are distinct classes and orders recognised by the constitution, than where the government is simple and uniform, no matter whether it be a monarchy, an aristocracy, or a democracy. Even in modern times, we find unmixed forms of government fatal to individual independence; the despotism of Russia is not more crushing than that which was exercised by the Venetian oligarchy, and the best authorities inform us that a similar tendency in absolute democracy to establish despotism may be distinctly seen in the United States of America. "I am not acquainted," says De Tocqueville, "with any country in which there is so little true independence of mind, and so little freedom of discussion as in America. The authority of a king is purely physical; it controls

* Arnold's Rome, i. 93.

the action of the subject without subduing his private will; but the majority in America is invested with a power which is physical and moral at the same time; it acts upon the will, as well as upon the actions of men, and represses not only all contest, but all controversy."* "There is less private and social freedom in America than there is in Europe," says Dr. Dewey; and specially referring to the condition of religious freedom in the United States, he adds, "I allow that the multiplicity of sects in this country (America) is some bond for their mutual forbearance and freedom, *but the strength and repose of a great establishment are in some respects more favourable to private liberty.* It is in the protected soil of great establishments that the germs of every great reform in the church have quietly taken root. For myself, if I were ever to permit my liberty to be compromised for such considerations, I would rather take my chance in the bosom of a great national religion, than amidst the jealous eyes of small and contending sects. And I think it will be found that a more liberal and catholic theology has always pervaded establishments than the bodies of dissenters from them. Nay I much doubt whether intolerance itself, in such countries—in England and Germany for instance—has ever gone to the length of Jewish and Samaritan exclusion that has been sometimes witnessed amongst us."†

The same eloquent writer describes some of the atrocious excesses to which absolute democracy no less than any other absolute form of government is exposed, though he does not go the entire length of proposing the

* De Tocqueville, i. 53. † Dewey's Moral Views, 177.

establishment of a privileged class to prevent the violent and irregular movements of the unchecked populace. "It is true and lamentable," he boldly declares, "that some of our citizens have strangely forgotten the very principle on which our institutions are based,—freedom —freedom of speech—freedom of publication—freedom of trial by jury, as the only condition on which life, liberty, or property in this country shall ever be touched. My blood runs cold in my veins, and I tremble as I look upon my children, to think that my house or yours may yet be surrounded by an armed mob, that you or I may be shot down without remorse on our own threshold, simply for asserting our honest opinion. . . Give me any tyranny rather than that most monstrous of all the tyrannies ever heard of—the bloody violence of a lawless people, with liberty on their lips and murder in their hearts. Let this body of mine sink under the Turkish bowstring, or the Russian knout, rather than be trodden out of life under the heels of a brutal populace."*

It was the peculiar good fortune of Rome that the legal existence both of the nobles and commons was recognized by the constitution; the struggle between the classes very early compelled all parties to make provision for individual protection; personal immunities were secured to every Roman citizen; the Valerian and Porcian laws limited the right of the state over its individual members; and we can find no similar wisdom in any of the Grecian constitutions.

Few histories exhibit more strongly than that of Rome the distinction between the external greatness

† Dewey's Moral Views, 285.

and the internal prosperity of a state. The great English moralist has said,

> Extended empire, like expanded gold,
> Exchanges solid strength for feeble splendour:

it was not when the Roman name was highest, and the Roman empire most extensive, that the Roman people was most happy. From the moment that the Romans resolved to carry their arms beyond the limits of Italy, and to become a nation of conquerors, the social state of the citizens began to deteriorate: "the rich became too rich, and the poor too poor:" the increasing inequality of fortune revived the old relation of clientship in its worst form, and the gratuitous distributions of corn, which we may regard as the Roman system of Poor Laws, created in the city a demoralized, because a pauperized populace, ever ready "to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage." It was owing to this class that the reform attempted by the Gracchi failed, for the people consented to receive a distribution of rent from the usurpers of the public lands, instead of a division of the lands themselves.

The germs of ruin were planted at the very moment when the exclusive and injurious privileges of the aristocracy were abolished, and the rights of the Commons established on a just and permanent foundation. The governing body then included the nobles and the middle classes, but it excluded a party which grew more numerous as Rome increased in wealth and population; that is, the operatives and labourers who came from various quarters to seek employment in the city, the emancipated slaves, and those whose occupations were deemed degrading, and who were shut out by a

strong public opinion from all political distinctions. In every free constitution that has ever existed, a principle of exclusion is established somewhere; even the wildest advocates of what is called "universal suffrage," do not propose that females, infants, or the insane should be admitted into the class of electors and representatives. In most states, an arbitrary qualification has been adopted; but though confessedly arbitrary, the qualification is too often raised to the rank of a constitutional principle. But whatever may be the nature of the qualification, it often happens that the progress of society multiplies the number, or in other words, the physical force of those who are excluded; while the continued exclusion degrades the class in their own estimation, and tends to render their future enfranchisement perilous to society. The Roman Reform Bills, as the Licinian and Hortensian Rogations may be called, were great blessings when they were first enacted; but these blessings could not be permanent unless they were accompanied by prospective measures for the future extension of the suffrage, measures which would gradually train up the excluded classes, and prepare them for future enfranchisement.

The unnecessary exclusion of any person, or class of persons, from the benefits of the society of which he or they form a constituent part, is obviously unjust. It is a healthy sign of a community to see persons anxious to acquire the right of voting; every person who makes such a claim, virtually says, "I am interested in the welfare of my country; I feel that responsibilities are attached to me as a member of the state, and I am anxious to do my duties as a man and a citizen." The

restriction that excludes such a person, if he is neither intellectually nor morally unfitted to perform these duties, is a serious social evil, for it forbids the practice of social virtue. But it would be absurd to deny that the gradual extension of the suffrage to excluded classes, and still more the establishment of a system of moral discipline by which these classes should be gradually prepared for safe enfranchisement, are the greatest and most difficult problems that remain to be solved by political wisdom. We do not pretend to have discovered how either may be effected; it is enough to shew that their solution cannot be neglected with impunity, for it was such neglect, aggravated indeed by many other circumstances, that mainly led to the overthrow of the constitutional freedom of Rome, and the establishment of imperial despotism.

The great peril arising from an excluded class is, that it furnishes a party ready-made to the ambitious and the unprincipled. An alliance between the highest aristocrats and the lowest populace is by no means uncommon in the history of the progress of society; they have often made common cause against the middle class, which they both equally dislike, and almost detest. Cataline, in his Letter to Catullus, fairly confesses that disappointed ambition made him a demagogue;* both the triumvirates, but especially the second, were established by a union of violent aristocrats with the mere rabble of Rome. "In such an union between the highest and lowest classes of society," says Doctor

* Quod fructu laboris industriæque meæ privatus, statum dignitatis non obtinebam, publicam miserorum causam, pro meâ consuetudine suscepi.—*Sallust.*

Arnold, "the gain is mostly for the former; the latter derive little advantage from the alliance, except the pleasure of the horse in the fable, when he saw his old enemy the stag effectually humbled. But the coalition is not one solely of political expediency: it arises partly out of certain moral affinities, existing between those whose social and political conditions are the extreme opposites. The moral bond between them is their common impatience of law and good government; that anarchical and selfish restlessness, which sees in the existing order of society an equal restraint upon the pride and passion of the highest, and on the needy cupidity of the lowest."*

But at such a crisis it must be acknowledged that the middle classes are not always free from blame: after having conquered an aristocracy, they are too likely to become an aristocracy themselves; they rarely remove institutions which tend to perpetuate the moral inferiority of the excluded classes; and still more rarely do they introduce new institutions, designed to elevate their character, and fit them for civil life. So far was this from being the case at Rome, that its rulers systematically laboured to form an idle and licentious populace, by public and private largesses,† and those who attempted to check such extravagance ran the risk of being stigmatized as enemies to the poor; a common calumny against all who advise the poor to reject a small immediate bribe for a great prospective advantage.

* Arnold's Rome, ii. 271.

† Juventus quæ in agris manuum mercede inopiam toleraverat, privatis atque publicis largitionibus excita, urbanum otium ingrato labori prætulerat.—*Sallust.*

The principles of civilization which most tended to establish the supremacy of Rome, were the solidity of its religious and civil institutions, and at the same time the expansive power which both possessed, and by which, without destruction, they could be accommodated to the changes of times and circumstances. But we cannot look at the history of the period when the external greatness of Rome commenced, without perceiving that the success of the republic may be ascribed to many other causes besides its inherent strength. It was for Rome that Philip clove down the liberties of Greece at Chæronea, and Alexander subverted the ancient empire of Persia; it was for Rome that Carthage colonized Spain, and the Ptolemies revived the commercial plans of the Pharaohs. In the political, not less than in the physical world, there are traces of design, and of a unity of plan and purpose, which are no less evidences of a presiding deity than the combinations of the planetary system are proofs of an Almighty Creator. We see that there is design, though we cannot comprehend its nature: that there is a plan, though so extensive and complicated as to pass our powers of comprehension; and we can at least dimly perceive a purpose in the uniform result—the advancement of human improvement.

When we compare the early history of Rome with that of cotemporary nations, it is scarcely possible to avoid seeing, that even while ignorant that such a republic as Rome existed, the actions of the Greeks, the Macedonians, the Syrians, and Egyptians were undesignedly preparing a way for the future march of Roman triumph; while Italian history shews that Rome

was held back until the precise moment when the world was prepared to receive her empire. It is not designed to exclude the consideration of secondary causes; but in this instance the secondary causes are so numerous and varied, and yet so harmonious in their operation, that it would be scarcely less absurd to deny the existence of a superintending power to produce such an unity, than to ascribe the harmony of the planetary world to mere chance.*

The supremacy of Rome was owing far more to its moral than to its intellectual superiority. Polybius, comparing the Roman republic with the other cotemporary republics, distinctly points out the civil and religious institutions which rendered the public morals of the Romans more perfect than those of their cotemporaries, and hazards a prediction—amply justified by the event—that the overthrow of the republic would result from the decay of morality, symptoms of which had become visible in his own time. It is probable that Rome might have had a national literature, if the conquest of Greece had been delayed for a century. There is abundant proof that the Romans once had a native literature, consisting of ballads, heroic lays,

* "In one respect, indeed, the view of the moral world discovers even a more glorious revelation of the attributes of God. The planet revolves for ever in its appointed orbit; and the noblest triumph of mechanical philosophy is to have ascertained, that the perturbations of its course are all compensated within determined periods, and its movements exempted from decay. But man, weak and erring though he be, is still progressive in his moral nature. He does not move round for ever in one unvarying path of moral action. The combinations of his history, exhibit not only the unity of the material system, but also the continually advancing improvement belonging to a being of a higher order.—*Miller's History Philosophically Illustrated*, iv. 560.

lyrical and dramatic pieces, and political lampoons; these germs might have become great and flourishing, had they not been suddenly consigned to neglect, and the whole energy of the Roman mind directed to the cultivation of the exotic literature of Greece:

> For conquered Greece brought in her captive arts,
> And triumphed o'er her savage conqueror's hearts;
> Taught their rough verse its numbers to refine,
> And their rude style with elegance to shine.*

The poet has not quite stated the full extent of the conquest: the Romans not only imported ideas and sentiments from the Greeks, but metres, the structure of verse, and even, in some cases, language. The Saturnian metres were exchanged for hexameters; the old legends of Latium were accommodated to the mythology of Greece, and dramatists rested their fame on their skill as translators rather than inventors. This imitation was a tacit confession of inferiority, but a more direct acknowledgment was not wanting. Virgil himself distinctly abandons all claim to intellectual merit for himself and his countrymen. He introduces Anchises, thus warning Æneas, the supposed founder of the race:

> Let others better mould the running mass
> Of medals, and inform the breathing brass,
> And soften into flesh a marble face;
> Plead better at the bar; describe the skies,
> And when the stars descend and when they rise:
> But Rome, 't is thine alone, with awful sway,
> To rule mankind, and make the world obey,
> Disposing peace and war thy own majestic way;
> To tame the proud, the fettered slave to free —
> These are imperial arts, and worthy thee.†

* Francis's Horace, ii. Epistles, i. † Dryden's Virgil. Æneid vi.

But though the materials of the classical literature of Rome were confessedly derived from Greece, yet with these materials the Romans established an intellectual sway scarcely less extensive than their political pre-eminence. They introduced the Latin language and literature into all the Western nations they subdued; and it was chiefly, if not only, through the Latin imitators, that the Italians, Spaniards, Gauls, and Germans became acquainted with the intellectual advancement and refinement for which humanity is indebted to Greece.*

Feeling the necessity of some principle of unity in

* I may be permitted to quote some remarks on this subject from an essay (a Sibylline leaf wafted back) which appeared in a popular journal: "The triumphs of the colossal power of Rome were as great in intellectual as in political pre-eminence; its influence as extensive, its authority as resistless, and its effects as pernicious. But magnitude is not the only point of similitude between the mental and physical sway of *the Eternal City;* there is a striking analogy between the means by which both were established, the circumstances which gave them durability, and the consequences by which they were attended. If the refined political institutions of Athens and Sparta, equally with the barbarous governments of the North and East, melted into one imperial rule, so also did the wild grandeur of oriental poetry, the rich elegance of Grecian bards, and the rude lays of our Northern ancestors, all yield to the influence of Rome, and aid in the formation of a literature which was alone deemed classical. In all her conquests, both over mind and matter, Rome fought with borrowed weapons — the religion that inspired her citizens with confidence in the protection of heaven, was borrowed from the Tuscans; the Samnites instructed her soldiers in military discipline; Gaul gave the sword and Greece the shield; Carthage sent the model of that navy which was to ensure her own destruction;—all these elements of power were, by a process of assimilation peculiar to the Roman state, formed into parts of its constitution: like the monster in Frankenstein, the members were taken from a thousand carcases, and moulded into an organized whole, of amazing energy and resistless prowess."—*Athenæum*, No. 195.

their extended and diversified empire, the Romans endeavoured to make their language universal. They succeeded in the Northern and Western provinces, for there, Latin had only to struggle against rude and barbarous dialects; they failed completely in all the provinces which had formed a part of the Macedonian empire, because the superiority of the Greek language, for every purpose of civilised life, was unquestionable, and indeed was readily confessed by the Romans themselves. Thus the actual division of the Roman empire into Grecian and Latin states, was marked distinctly by difference of language, long before any of the emperors had meditated a formal partition.

The empire of Rome had been acquired under the sanction and with the aid of the national religion; it was therefore greatly weakened when that religion was overthrown. The fall of Polytheism is a subject of too general an interest to be discussed here incidentally; we shall therefore examine its consequences in the next chapter. For the present, it will be sufficient to state, that as every political institution in Rome was more or less connected with religion, the stability of those institutions, which had been so great a source of acquiring and securing empire, shared in the decline of the national faith.

But these institutions were directly assailed from other quarters. The forms of the republic were wisely preserved by the Cæsars and the Antonines, for they were useful in shielding the monarch from personal responsibility. Had there been no senate to share in the popular odium, the death of Sejanus would scarcely have saved Tiberius from the consequences of his crimes.

Less enlightened emperors did not perceive this advantage; they trusted to the standing army, and thus made the soldiers masters of themselves and the empire. Dioclesian changed the despotism of the camp for that of the court, and deprived Rome of its political importance, by removing the court to other cities. This change was consummated by Constantine; and though the empire was still called Roman, Rome ceased to be its metropolis.

But the changes in government, and the removal of the seat of power, were less fatal to the Romans and the Italian people, than the corruption and demoralization which pervaded every class of society. Among the most prominent causes of this corruption, we may reckon the gratuitous distributions of corn, the great extension of slavery, and the gladiatorial system. It is not easy to determine at what period of Roman history the custom of distributing corn to the poorer citizens was introduced, but we find that demagogues soon made the system subservient to their ambition, by proposing to increase the amount of the largesses; for it is a cheap mode of acquiring popularity, to be very generous at the expense of other people. They complained that the allowance was not greater than that made to a slave, and therefore accused the government of treating the people like slaves. They did not see that they were thus creating a helpless population, destitute of industry and prudence, ready to submit to any form of government which would provide subsistence and recreation.* The "sportula," or dole, given by the wealthy to their clients, may be reckoned among

* "Panem" and "Circenses."—*Juvenal.*

the mischievous forms of public and private generosity which tend to demoralise a people. Juvenal complains, that in his age, even the nobles submitted to receive these alms from wealthy patrons, and gives us a very amusing description of the begging impostors:

"A wood
Of litters thick besiege the donor's gate,
And begging lords and teeming ladies wait
The promised dole: nay, some have learn'd the trick
To beg for absent persons; feign them sick,
Close mew'd in their sedans for fear of air;
And for their wives produce an empty chair.
"This is my spouse, dispatch her with her share:
'T is Galla"—"Let her ladyship but peep"—
"No Sir, 't is pity to disturb her sleep." *

Under the successors of Constantine, the monthly distributions of corn were converted into a daily allowance of bread. A vast number of ovens was constructed and maintained at the public expense, and, at the appointed hour, each citizen who was furnished with a ticket, ascended the flight of steps which had been appointed to his peculiar quarter or division, and received, either as a gift, or at a very low price, a loaf of bread, of the weight of three pounds, for the use of his family. Bacon, oil, and wine, were likewise distributed regularly, and on any great occasion, public feasts were added. No greater proof of the demoralizing effects of such a system, than the total disappearance of the small landed proprietors in Italy, and the want of a middle class in Rome. Even in the age which preceded the fall of the republic, it was computed, that only two thousand citizens possessed an independent subsistence. †

* Dryden's Juvenal, Satire i. † Cicero de Officiis, ii. 21.

The employment of slaves in the works of the field, and in most branches of manufacture, was another cause of the great demoralization of Italy under the empire. The slaves originally were barbarian captives taken in war, and purchased by the slave-merchants at a very low price.* They were naturally eager to regain their freedom, and revenge the wrongs they had endured, and hence the most cruel regulations were made to retain them in bondage. When the extension of the empire rendered war less frequent, the interests of the masters coinciding with those of humanity, procured more lenient treatment for the slaves; their marriages were encouraged, greater care was taken of their health, and they were even allowed to possess property. Still these alleviations depended on the temper and circumstances of their owners, who had absolute authority even over their existence. Juvenal represents an imperious wife displaying her authority over her husband, by ordering a slave to be put to death without assigning any reason but her will:

> "Go, drag that slave to death,"—Your reason, why
> Should the poor innocent be doom'd to die?
> What proofs? For when man's life is in debate,
> The judge can ne'er too long deliberate.—
> "Call'st thou that slave a man?" the wife replies,
> "Proved or unproved the crime, the villain dies.
> I have the sovereign power to save or kill,
> And give no other reason but my will."†

It does not appear that a census was ever taken of the slaves of Rome, but there is abundant evidence

* Plutarch tells us, that in the camp of Lucullus, a slave could be purchased for four drachmæ, that is, about three shillings of our money.

† Dryden's Juvenal, Satire vi.

that they were much more numerous then the free population. It was justly apprehended that there would be great danger in making them acquainted with their own numbers, and on this account Seneca informs us that the proposal for discriminating them by a peculiar dress was at once rejected. Athenæus declares that he knew very many Romans who kept for ostentation rather than use, ten and even twenty thousand slaves. This may perhaps be an exaggeration; but Tacitus informs us that on a very melancholy occasion, no less than four hundred slaves were found in a single palace in Rome. The anecdote is very remarkable, not merely because it proves the great amount of the slave population, but also because it shews what sanguinary precautions were required to shield the masters from their vengeance.

According to the ancient laws of Rome, if a master was murdered by his slave, all the slaves that lived under the same roof were to be involved in the same penalty as the criminal. Pedanius Secundus, the governor of Rome under Nero, was murdered by one of his slaves, and as he maintained four hundred of these unhappy beings in his palace, the Roman citizens were revolted by the wholesale butchery which the law required. The matter was referred to the senate, and after a long debate it was resolved by the majority, that notwithstanding the age of some, the sex of others, and the undoubted innocence of most, the whole four hundred should be condemned to death and executed. It was not without difficulty that this atrocious sentence was fulfilled. Nero had to issue an edict to restrain the people, and to order out all the military force in Rome to guard the place of execution.

The invasions of Alaric and Attila were greatly facilitated by the multitude of slaves in Italy. They easily recruited their armies from a population so justly disaffected; no less than forty thousand slaves once joined Alaric in a body, and they became the most desperate and sanguinary portion of his army. A slave-holding country must ever be at the mercy of invaders; it would be a fearful contemplation to speculate on the consequences of the Royal African corps, or a brigade of the West India regiments effecting a landing in the southern states of America.

It is impossible to speak or think of the Gladiatorial system, that worst aggravation of the horrors of Roman slavery, without referring to Byron's noble description of the Dying Gladiator:

I see before me the gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low—
And through his side the last drops ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder shower; and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost, nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother—he their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—
All this rush'd with his blood.—Shall he expire,
And unavenged?—Awake, ye Goths, and glut your ire!

Most of the gladiators were barbarian slaves or cap-

tives, purchased by contractors for public and private exhibitions of these sanguinary spectacles. No war was ever so destructive to the human race as these sports. The principal magistrates, the candidates for office, and the heirs of any great and rich citizen lately deceased, gratified the populace with these sights during the republic; but the emperors, whose policy it was to court the mob as their surest support against any confederation of the nobles, exhibited them on almost every occasion. Julius Cæsar, in his ædileship, diverted the people with three hundred and twenty couple of gladiators; and Trajan in a solemnity of more than a hundred days, exhibited no less than a thousand couple. Besides the torrents of blood which flowed at the funerals, in the amphitheatres, the circus, the forums, and other public places, gladiators were introduced at feasts, and tore each other to pieces amidst the supper tables, to the great delight and applause of the guests.

Authors have been found who have attempted to palliate or even justify these barbarous sports on the same ground that bull-baiting, bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and man-fighting were defended in England; it was said that they kept alive the manly and martial spirit of the people. Experience has shewn that even this miserable excuse is destitute of foundation; so far is a taste for sanguinary sport from being an incentive to courage, that it was quite a proverb with our soldiers during the last war, that the most cruel were the most cowardly. The Spanish bull-fights are the nearest approximation to the gladiatorial combats which can be found in modern Europe, and assuredly the Spaniards are far from being the bravest people in Christendom.

Amusements of blood and cruelty may, and do inculcate assassination, treachery and murder; but they never did, and they never can inspire the courage and firmness that constitute a hero. They only served to brutalize the Roman populace, already demoralized by a vicious administration; and if they did not accelerate the fall of the empire, they at least stripped fallen greatness of all its claim to pity, and caused the ruin of Rome to be hailed as the triumph of humanity.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE DECLINE OF POLYTHEISM.

HAVING in the two preceding chapters examined some of the leading moral influences which the polytheism of Greece and Rome exercised over the social condition of Europe, it is proper to take a view of the effects produced by the decline and fall of their religious systems, before we enter on any examination of the new principles of civilization developed by the Christian system. This is an inquiry of considerable difficulty and importance; but we shall be greatly aided in the examination if we first direct our attention to the more general question—the circumstances that mark the decay and termination of a dogma or an opinion.

No opinion or dogma, totally and absolutely false, ever held dominion over mankind; a prevalent creed must, in the outset, have won its way by giving prominence to some great truth, and by keeping in the back-ground the portion of falsehood with which it was united. The Hellenic system of polytheism prevailed over the elementary mythology of Asia, principally by attributing human sympathies to its deities, and thus bringing forward the great truth—that a religion of love is more desirable for mankind than a religion of fear. The falsehood combined with the dogma was, that sympathies for humanity could *only* be expected

from beings having human shape.* The false part of the creed was that from which its substantial forms were derived; and the more these forms were multiplied and extended, the farther was the spiritual truth removed from observation, until at length no trace remained of the creed but an unintelligible ritual and inexplicable observances.

Religious truth is peculiarly exposed to the danger of being absorbed thus in forms, but at the same time it would be a most perilous experiment to present it always to mankind as a vague abstraction: an opinion that has not been embodied in form, rarely influences life or conduct; it is a speculation, and nothing more. It is true that the form of religion may exist without the substance, but it is equally true that the substance rarely exists without the form.

The peril of forms results from the natural indolence of the human mind. During the struggle necessary for the establishment of an opinion, the truth on which it is based remains pure and perfect; but when the victory is won, triumph produces apathy, and the conquerors trust to formularies for the memory, instead of proofs for the understanding. Two great evils necessarily result: the grounds of belief are shifted from argument to authority, and from reason to credulity;†

* This may, perhaps, have been derived from a previous falsehood; the attribution of any form to the Deity, and then the anthropomorphism of the Greeks, though still a falsehood, was an approximation to truth; in one form it was a truth, namely, the necessity of uniting divinity with humanity, "not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God."

† I use the word credulity, not faith; for according to the apostolic definition, faith is "belief grounded on evidence." St. Paul says,

while the forms are the more easily corrupted as their proper signification sinks into oblivion. Even if human depravity did not corrupt formularies, symbols, and ceremonies; the lapse of time, the changes of circumstances, fashions, language and modes of expression, divert formularies from their original meaning, and obscure the truth they were intended to shadow forth.* The first advocates of the opinion, — or the first reformers as they may be called, for every introduction of new opinion is reform—generally increase the danger, by making no distinction between the forms which ought to be permanent, and those which are designed for a temporary purpose. Indeed they generally give most strength and prominence to the institutions designed to meet some pressing evil, peculiar to their own times. They do not reflect, that a correction continuing to exist after an abuse has disappeared, like taking medicine after a disease is cured, is almost

"Faith is the subsistence or existence (υποστασις) of things hoped for; the demonstration (το ελεγχος) of things not seen." An existence can only be proved by evidence, and a demonstration without argument is a contradiction in terms.

* It is to be feared that to some extent this has taken place in the language of our venerable Liturgy; and though a change in its form may not be advisable, I think that it would be highly desirable for clergymen to deliver lectures on the liturgy to the less educated part of their congregation, explaining it word by word, and paragraph by paragraph, and taking particular care to explain, when necessary, their own explanation As a proof of the want of such a system, I may mention that I have many times heard dissenters object to the General Absolution,—that in the sentence, "He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy gospel,"—the word "He" meant the minister; and I have known members of the church, and these not of the lowest rank, acquiesce in the interpretation.

certain to become an abuse itself. Take, for example, some of the creeds to be found in ecclesiastical history; these were prepared to check some heresy prevalent at the time of their adoption, and consequently greater prominence is given to the articles that contradict cotemporary errors than to those which form the foundation of the common faith; and moreover, these articles are expressed with a strength of language, which, under other circumstances, would appear exaggerated even to the authors. When the heresies were forgotten these articles remained, and we find that they proved a snare and a stumbling-block to all the oriental churches.

An established system of opinions must frequently rest for its main support on simple acquiescence in its forms; but it is exposed to serious danger if it does not widen this basis by explaining the forms, shewing their significance, and presenting evidence for the truth they contain. Inquiry will come, whether it be desired or not; scepticism will develope itself, and when it finds no solution for its doubts, will reject the system altogether. And this result cannot be affected by the greater or less amount of absolute truth in the doctrines, for that absolute truth does not become a moral truth until it is established by proof in the understanding.*

Doubt is too frequently treated as a crime, and attributed either to obliquity of intellect or hardness of heart; but doubt is a necessary accompaniment of a

* See Archbishop Whately's Essays on some of the Dangers to Christian Faith, especially the Second Essay—On the Danger of neglecting Evidence.

spirit of inquiry and research, and its first movements are rather proofs of amity than hostility to an established creed. The earliest desire of scepticism is to discover in the prevalent doctrines something that may justify former belief in them, satisfy the present good-will towards them, and firmly establish them for the future, on the basis of enlightened conviction. It will not do to tell such a mind that doubt is sinful, and more perilous is it to check or punish the desire for procuring the solution of difficulties: if this be done, the result is certain; mild scepticism will be changed into confirmed hostility to the doctrines.* The system if true—and if its truth be not concealed and corrupted by antiquated forms, which have been perverted in th course of centuries, by the ambition of some, or the ignorance of others—will afford the honest inquirers what they seek, and they will thus attain a more settled conviction and firm faith than if they had never doubted. But if it be false, or if its truth be so corrupted by the abuses of centuries as to become a virtual falsehood, scepticism soon becomes confirmed, and the ancient system is rejected, at once and for ever.

The moment that this decisive step is taken, every thing connected with the rejected doctrine assumes a new aspect; its most venerable traditions appear to be inven-

* On this point, I can unfortunately speak from experience. A young and intelligent lad, with whom I was well acquainted, sought from his teacher a solution of some difficulties in the New Testament, which by the way, were of easy solution to a well-informed man; he candidly explained the nature of his doubts, and much to his surprise, was severely punished as a blasphemer. The consequence will surprise nobody: he lived and died, not merely an infidel, but a zealous apostle of infidelity.

tions devised for interested purposes, its most solemn forms seem but idle mummery. The persons who feel thus, have been led to such a conclusion by their moral nature; their conviction is therefore mingled with indignation; they refuse to believe what is false, or to reverence what is contemptible. "A new faith is erected in their souls on the ruins of the old."* This faith has no positive elements; it is nothing more than a negation of the received faith: but it is vigorous, because it was unexpected; the conviction is living in the soul with all the passion of a first love; and finally, it is the more vigorous, because it is felt to be revolutionary. The sceptics proclaim their discoveries, and are, at first, derided by the whole world. But doubt once proclaimed, rapidly insinuates itself into the public mind, and ere long, those who govern in the name of the ancient faith discover that the foundation of their power is shaken.

The formularies which in the age of quiet submission passed without challenge, now prove faithless to their masters; they contain no elements of self-defence, for the truth by which they first won supremacy has been long since forgotten; the possessors of power, therefore, have recourse to physical force, and this appears to the reflective part of mankind a tacit acknowledgment that their cause can no longer be maintained by reason or argument. But, in the struggle, a time comes when the innovators are perplexed by their very success; they are all-powerful to destroy, but they are unable to supply the void which they create; they find that scep-

* Jouffroy: Melanges Philosophiques, p. 7. I do not agree with all the reasoning in the Essay entitled "Comment les dogmes finissent;" but I gladly confess that I have derived great assistance from so able an analysis of the history of opinion.

ticism cannot long survive its victim; man in the long run requires some positive belief, because he knows that truth has existence somewhere. The innovators hasten to supply the deficiency; but they are no longer unanimous, each has a system of his own, and they soon begin to hate each other more than the common enemy. This is the crisis of the revolution; if the reformers, yielding to pride, prejudice, and passion, continue their controversies, insist on the infallibility of their separate plans, and stigmatise all who refuse them assistance, as traitors and deserters, they will infallibly lose popular support; for the mass of the people, eager for truth yet despairing of a safe guide, will sink into apathy and indifference.

The partisans of the old system may now recover their lost ground: they have the unity which their adversaries want, and they are relieved from the necessity of maintaining a defensive position, because the systems devised by the innovators give them the opportunity of becoming assailants in turn. Moreover, among the schemes devised by the reformers there will doubtless be some absurd, impracticable, and even pernicious to society. It is easy to attribute these schemes to the entire body of reformers, and thus there is a fair chance that popular suspicion will be superadded to popular indifference. The very last thing that enters the heads of the innovating leaders is the possibility of a revival of the party that supported the antiquated doctrines, and so far as the mere doctrines are concerned they are right; but the party interested in old abuses is quite content to take the institutions without the doctrines, and, relying on the neutrality of the people, to assume their ancient power.

The peril of counter-revolution is thus greatest at the moment when the revolution itself is completed, and to avert this evil more caution is required than is usually found consistent with the enthusiasm, and more self-denial than belongs to the pride, of successful reformers. In some rare instances the crisis has passed over with little injury; but in most there has been a restoration of the ancient rule without the ancient belief, and then clever hypocrisy characterizes the government, and stupid indifference, or still more stupid superstition, engrosses the people. Truth seems to have been consigned to "the tomb of all the Capulets," never to rise again.

At such periods, despair seizes on those who love truth and their fellow men: but such a feeling is not justifiable; if they followed Truth, their mistress, to the sepulchre, they would find, like the lover of Verona, that they had mistaken a swoon for death, and might with him exclaim—

> Thou art not conquered: beauty's ensign yet
> Is crimson on thy lips and on thy cheek,
> And death's pale flag is not advanced there.

In the moral, as in the physical world, the truth of the beautiful Irish proverb is constantly exemplified—"The darkest hour of the night is that which precedes the day." The universe is full of secret causes, which appear altogether at the command of Providence, and break to pieces the most perfect structures of human art. Nothing is so frail as a dominion founded on force: a people without faith in its rulers, despises while it obeys them; rulers, without faith in themselves or each other, cannot hold together: there is a voice in the breast of the most corrupt, which speaks of liberty, truth, and

virtue; and when next the standard of the good cause is unfurled, it will be instantly surrounded by such a crowd of prosyletes as not only to render victory certain but defeat impossible. It was thus that the triumph of paganism over the imperfect reforms of philosophy prepared the way for the irresistible progress of Christianity.

In tracing the decline and fall of Polytheism, we have in the first place to inquire what were the circumstances which led to a doubt of its claims to credibility. We have seen that the more ancient mythology was purely elementary, and that some worship was offered to the powers of nature in every system of polytheism. Hence the explanation of physical phenomena became united to religious tradition, and as science was in its infancy when such explanations were framed, many of them were refuted by the subsequent progress of knowledge; and when these parts were proved absurd, the whole system was shaken. The first blow at Grecian polytheism was struck by Anaxagoras, when he disproved the personality of the solar orb, and declared it to be a mass of candescent matter larger than the Peloponnesus.

In all false religions we find the founders committing themselves to an explanation of physical phenomena, for these naturally excite the curiosity of an ignorant people, and the pretended power of tracing their causes is a great means of success to the impostor who passes himself for a prophet. Mohammed yielded to this temptation, and gave a very particular account of the system of the universe in the Koran, which has proved a sad stumbling-block to such of his followers as have become acquainted with modern science. In an account

of his travels in France, published by the Sheikh Refáa, head of the polytechnic school at Cairo, we find the following account of European science, in which the opposition of philosophy to the Koran is noticed with an obvious mixture of scepticism and hypocrisy:—"The French excel in all the practical sciences, and are equally well acquainted with the speculative. There are among them, however, certain philosophical opinions, which the reason of other nations will not readily admit; but they support them so ably and so plausibly, that they seem founded in reality. In astronomy, for instance, they are deeply skilled, and the aid of the instruments they have invented, renders them very superior to the ancients. But they have mixed with these sciences some heretical ideas, contrary to what we read in our sacred books; such as the assertion, that the earth revolves on its axis, and that the sun is stationary in the centre of the planetary system. They support these opinions by arguments which it is difficult to refute. The Mussulman who wishes to study French books, should therefore attach himself closely to the holy text of the Koran, and to our sacred traditions, to prevent his faith from being shaken."

It is a remarkable peculiarity of the Bible, that it propounds no physical theories, and authoritatively explains no natural phenomena. Every separate revelation, contained in the collected volume, was accommodated to the amount of knowledge possessed by those to whom it was addressed; and consequently it recognises certain systems as existing, but without in any way vouching for their authority. But this peculiarity, by which the Bible is so remarkably distinguished from

every pretended revelation, has been perversely assailed by commentators in almost every age, each of whom has endeavoured to graft his own hasty guesses, and crude fancies, on the sacred text. Such efforts, when they partially succeed, become a frequent source of infidelity to the inquiring and the educated; not because physical science is hostile to religion, but because false science has been allied to true religion by the ignorant and presumptuous, and religion then suffers for the demerits of its ally.

We have shewn the tendency in religious systems to allow the forms to absorb the doctrines, and the ritual to supersede the creed. Hence there was a constantly increasing disproportion between the doctrinal part of polytheism and the general intelligence of the community. This disproportion was greatly increased by the multiplication of divinities, and the introduction of foreign gods, whose worship naturally became more popular than that of the ancient deities, because they could not be convicted of having so often rejected the prayers and baffled the hopes of their votaries. Lucian humorously introduces Jupiter complaining, that "since altars were erected to the Egyptian Anubis, and the Thracian Bendis, these deities received countless hecatombs, whilst he was treated as a superannuated divinity, to whom it was quite enough to offer a bull annually."* But this multiplication of divinities was a proof of growing scepticism, and many, disgusted by the great variety of objects of worship,† became indifferent to all. But as the desire of fixed belief is natural to man,

* Lucian's Dialogues. Icaro-Menippus.

† Pitisaus asserts, that Rome contained more objects of worship than worshippers.

an attempt was made to remedy the disproportion between the doctrines and the forms, by representing the latter as allegories.

Allegorical interpretation delivered the members of the Pantheon from the charges of immorality involved in the old scandalous or puerile traditions; but they were justified at the expense of their personality. They became either abstract qualities, or physical objects. Minerva was but another name for wisdom, and Bacchus for wine. Thus divested of personality, they were no longer objects of fear or hope: the mythology subsisted, but the religion was at an end.

Allegorical interpretation of prevalent superstitions was probably the first form of philosophy. In Greece, the earlier philosophic schools laboured to reconcile their systems with the existing polytheism; but as knowledge advanced, philosophy receded farther and farther from the popular belief, until at last they became irreconcilably hostile. They were brought into direct collision by the trial of Socrates.

Whether Socrates was the friend or the enemy of polytheism, is a question open to much controversy. Plato affirms, that he had adopted the Theism of Anaxagoras, and grafted on it a moral system, quite inconsistent with the vulgar belief. Xenophon, on the other hand, avers that he was as strongly attached to all the popular superstitions as the most credulous Greek of his day. It is probable, that each of these disciples has coloured the faith of Socrates from his own private opinions. Xenophon certainly is the less credible witness; he had little opportunity of becoming intimate with Socrates, for he early deserted philosophy

to become a military adventurer; he was himself one of the most superstitious men of his age, and had such faith in omens and prodigies, that he detained his soldiers in a place where they were starving, because the sacrifices did not seem propitious to a march; his writings, however remarkable for elegance of style, are destitute of any depth of thought, or wide range of intelligence; and, from his own records, he appears to have been equally vain and weak-minded. "If Socrates, in his communications with Xenophon, according to his usual custom, suited the conversation to the character of the person addressed, he would only have discussed with *him*, those portions of his doctrines applicable to the purposes of ordinary life.*

Plato's account of the Theism of Socrates seems to be greatly confirmed by the accusations which Aristophanes urges against the philosopher. He avers, that Socrates worshipped the clouds, and Juvenal makes a similar charge against the Jews, thus rendering it probable, that both poets believed that worship could only be offered to a visible divinity.† The martyrdom of Socrates consummated the overthrow of polytheism as a religion; but it continued to exist as a system, because the rivalry and discord between his followers, as is usually the case with those who have destroyed error, led the people to view the entire subject with apathy

* Benjamin Constant justly says, "Xenophon has given us as the Socratic philosophy, what was really only a portion of it; whilst this philosophy forms but a part of the system of Plato. Socrates, in my opinion, was less superstitious than the one pupil, but at the same time less abstracted than the other."—*Du Polytheisme*, i. 190.

† Quidam sortiti metuentem sabbata patrem
Nil præter nubes et numen cœli adorant.—*Juvenal*, Sat. xiv.

and indifference. Polytheism existed, but without vitality or influence, and the empire of the human mind was transferred to an anomalous, but not uncommon union of scepticism and superstition.

A history of the credulity of infidels would make a very amusing volume: every one has heard of Lord Herbert's belief, that he was encouraged by a miracle to write a book, designed to prove that miracles were impossible: it is not very rare to find modern Sadducees who deny all spiritual existences, and yet have a nervous dread of ghosts, and Horace, in spite of his Epicurean philosophy, was quite terrified by thunder when the sky was clear. We must not then be surprised to find, that when polytheism was rejected by the scepticism of common sense, the more revolting absurdities of magic and sorcery were easily embraced by the vulgar. "Magic," says Benjamin Constant, "is the fetichism of civilized life. Fetichism is the effort of man to discover the divinity when nothing suggests the idea: magic is the effort of man to recover the idea after it has been lost."

Irreligion acquired supremacy at Rome when liberty was lost. After all that has been said of the coalition between hierarchies and arbitrary power, it is undeniable that the coalition between despotism and infidelity is a thousand times more perilous. A religious people may be enslaved, but an irreligious people never can be free. The very first element of rational liberty, a deep sense of responsibility, is wanting: there are no checks to selfishness, no incentives to disinterested conduct. This also was the æra of astrologers, sorcerers, and magicians. Lucan introduces the astrologer Figulus, predicting the

horrors of the civil wars, and gives a summary of his astrological doctrines, which is a valuable exposition of the nature of that form of superstition, and of the influence which it had acquired in Rome:

> But Figulus * exclaims (to science bred,
> And in the gods' mysterious secrets read;
> Whom nor Egyptian Memphis' sons excelled,
> Nor with more skill the rolling orb beheld;
> Well could he judge the labours of the sphere,
> And calculate the just revolving year):
> "The stars," he cries, "are in confusion hurled,
> And wandering Error quite misguides the world;
> Or if the laws of Nature yet remain,
> Some swift destruction now the Fates ordain.
> * * * * * *
> But, God of Battles! what dost thou provide,
> Who in the threatening Scorpion dost preside?
> With potent wrath around thy influence streams,
> And the whole monster kindles at thy beams:
> While Jupiter's more gentle rays decline,
> And Mercury with Venus faintly shine;
> The wandering lights are darkened all, and gone,
> And Mars now lords it o'er the heavens alone.
> Orion's starry falchion blazing wide,
> Refulgent glitters by his dreadful side.
> War comes, and savage slaughter must abound,
> The sword of violence shall right confound;
> The blackest crimes fair virtue's name shall wear,
> And impious fury rage for many a-year. †

Tiberius proscribed magic and astrology, but it was because he dreaded the use his indignant subjects

* Figulus was an intimate friend of Cicero. There was a story, mentioned by Suetonius as a common report, that he predicted to Octavius, the father of Augustus Cæsar, the reign of his son over the Roman people. Octavius ordered the boy to be put to death, but Figulus found means to divert him from his intention. "There are cases" says Benjamin Constant, "in which we may lament that a crime *has omitted*."

† Rowe's Lucan, i.

might make of them. A herd of magicians and astrologers were his companions at Capreæ, where he lived, as Juvenal says,

> Coop'd in a narrow isle, observing dreams,
> With flattering wizards, and erecting schemes.

Nero invited sorcerers to Rome, that he might be initiated in their secrets. Adrian was a professed student of witchcraft.* Alexander Severus, Dioclesian, and Constantine before his conversion, endeavoured by magical practices to dive into the secrets of futurity. Spells and incantations were employed by all classes to obtain the aid of the mysterious powers of darkness; and it seemed as if men had abandoned the worship of the gods to follow that of devils. Lucian's description of the influence acquired by the great impostor Alexander of Paphlagonia, would appear an incredible romance, were it not confirmed by all the historians of his age, and attested by existing medals struck in honour of the impostor.

"Such then," says Constant, "was the aspect of humanity. Infidelity vaunted itself on having delivered man from prejudices, errors, and fears; and all possible fears, all prejudices, and all errors, seemed to be unchained at once. The empire of reason was proclaimed, and all the world was seized with madness; systems were based on calculation addressed to self-interest, permitted pleasure, recommended repose; and never were delusions more disgraceful, tumults more disorderly, and sufferings more poignant, until at last the miserable generation seemed willing to descend

* Dryden's Juvenal, Sat x.

into the infernal regions, to escape an earth from which the Divinity had been banished."*

In such a condition it was impossible that the human mind should long remain. Mankind discovered the value of a positive religion so soon as they tried to do without it: scepticism, and its ally credulity, had proved such severe masters, that men made an effort to get back to the polytheism of their forefathers, which, as belief was not in their power, was utterly impossible. They revived the forms, but the doctrines were gone; and in fact, when we examine the writers who flourished in the last age of polytheism, we discover obvious proofs that their doctrines were very nearly pure theism, and therefore utterly inconsistent with their forms. The philosophic system generally called Neo-Platonism was an attempt, and not a very infelicitous one, to combine both; but it wanted authority and consistency sufficient to elevate it into a rule of conduct; it proclaimed the want of some form which would embody the doctrine of the Divine Unity as the first great principle of the religious system, but it did not supply the deficiency. Reason continued hesitating before the gaping void, until Revelation came to its aid, and exhibited Christianity as "the divine system" for which the world had long wished, without comprehending the nature of its desires.

* Du Polytheisme, ii. 128. See also the Sixth Satire of Juvenal for a description of the arts practised by the fortune-tellers and sorcerers at Rome, too long and too disgusting to be quoted.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY, AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CIVILIZATION.

In all the ancient systems of religion previous to the introduction of Christianity, we find that more attention was paid to the physical attributes of the Deity than to his spiritual nature. That this should be the case in polytheism is not wonderful, but it is equally so in the purest systems of theism to which unassisted reason has attained. Poets and philosophers have celebrated the Almighty power that causes the sun to shed its rays over the earth, but not the beneficence which bade it shine on the evil and the good: they have praised the wisdom which directed the rain to fall in its due season, but not the tender mercy which sent it equally on the just and the unjust. Under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, the Divine power always appears more prominent than the Divine goodness: in Jehovah's address to Job, all the subjects introduced refer to the attribute of Omnipotence, and even the passage in which the moral government of mankind is claimed, will be found to display the absolute sovereignty rather than the merciful care of the Deity:

> Gird up now thy loins like a hero;
> I will question thee, and answer thou me.
> Canst thou render my purpose void?
> Wilt thou condemn me, to justify thyself?

Hast thou an arm like that of God?
Canst thou thunder with a voice like his?
Deck thyself now with majesty and excellence:
Array thyself in glory and beauty.
Pour forth the fury of thy wrath;
Look on the haughty, and humble him;
Look on the proud, and prostrate him;
Crush down the wicked to the dust,
Hide them in the earth together,
Cover their faces with dishonour;
Then I will confess to thy praise,
That thine own right hand can save thee.*

The patriarchal creed of the Divine Unity was greatly enlarged under the Mosaic dispensation, and the moral government of the universe was more prominently brought forward as an article of faith; but still the attribute of power was more frequently mentioned than goodness or mercy, and even the declaration of the paternal protection accorded by the Deity to his creatures is introduced by an assertion of the terrors of his sovereignty. "The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.†

In the prophetical books, particularly in those written after the captivity, the spiritual nature of the Deity is more fully developed than in the Mosaic records; but we nowhere find it depicted with the force and univer-

* Job xli. 13—20, Wemyss's Translation. I cannot for the last time refer to this work without adding, that during the many years that I have been a student of Biblical Hebrew, I have met with no version of a book of the Old Testament superior to Wemyss's Job in accuracy, elegance, and depth of information.

† Deuteronomy x. 17, 18.

sality that belongs to the Gospels; everywhere in the Old Testament the material manifestations predominate over the mental.* "The remarkable passage," says Mr. Milman, "in which God is described as revealing himself to Elijah,—neither in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice – may be considered, we will not say prophetic, but singularly significant of the sensations to be excited in the human mind by the successive revelations of the Deity."†

The two great corruptions to which polytheism led, were grovelling superstition in the vulgar, and scepticism in the philosopher. It is an error to suppose that the sublime speculations of Plato were influential, even in the schools; the colder reasoning of Aristotle exercised much wider sway. But notwithstanding the great difference between their systems, it will be found that the physical attributes of Deity almost alone come under consideration. Plato represents the Supreme as an absolute governor, delegating the regulation of the world to inferior intelligence; Aristotle goes farther, and denies a special providence, and any relation, mediate or immediate, between man and God. In fact

* Bauer's Theology of the Old Testament historically traces the history of the Jewish conceptions respecting the nature of Deity, from the days of Moses to those of Malachi. His object is manifestly to weaken the claims of the Holy Scriptures to inspiration, but in fact he rather confirms their divine authority, by shewing that each successive revelation was accommodated to the state of intelligence of the age in which it was made. But for the perverse habit of treating the Bible as a book, instead of a succession of books, the imperfections in the earlier descriptions of the Divinity would become evidences of scriptural veracity, instead of furnishing cavillers with grounds of objection.

† Milman's History of Christianity, i. 45.

his reasonings lead to an identification of Deity with the physical laws of the universe and the moral order of the world, rather than its Cause. This view was not very different from the Fate or Necessity of the Stoics, and it was based on the same reasoning that led a modern German philosopher to the verge of atheism.*

A second characteristic of the notions formed of the Divinity by ancient nations, before the introduction of Christianity, is, that they were *localised.* In the Old Testament, Jehovah is represented as peculiarly, though not exclusively, the God of his chosen people; but the Jews themselves perverted the doctrine into the belief that they alone were the objects of his peculiar care. The religions of all the states round the Mediterranean were interwoven with their political constitutions, insomuch that they appear to have believed that the protection of their gods depended on the possession of citizenship. The several deities introduced into Rome, from Greece and Egypt, were in some sort *naturalized;* and it was hoped that they would be thus induced to bestow their favours upon the state that had adopted them. Each religion was separate and national: no man was invited to become a proselyte unless he also wished to become a citizen. Religion, like policy, was designed for masses, for the collective body of the state, and it took no heed of any persons beyond the pale. Rome destroyed the various nationalities, but it had nothing to substitute in their stead. The world, or at

* Fichte. So far as I can understand this philosopher's system, he considers the notion of Deity to be a personification of the immutable laws that govern the universe, with the notions of power and will superadded. I cannot comprehend his reasoning, in the attempt to reconcile these notions with immutability.

least the Roman world, felt an aching void, which Christianity alone could remedy.

But though Christianity was suited to the circumstances of the time, it by no means follows that Christianity was created by these circumstances. To use the language of Mr. Milman,* "I strongly protest against the opinion, that the *origin* of the religion can be attributed, according to a theory adopted by many foreign writers, to the gradual and spontaneous development of the human mind. Christ is as much beyond his own age, as his own age is beyond the darkest barbarism. The time, though fitted to receive, could not by any combination of prevalent opinions, or by any conceivable course of moral improvement, have produced Christianity. The conception of the human character of Jesus, and the simple principles of the new religion, as they were in direct opposition to the predominant opinions and temper of his own countrymen, so they stand completely alone in the history of our race; and as imaginary, no less than real, altogether transcend the power of man's moral conceptions. Supposing the Gospels purely fictitious, or that, like the "Cyropædia" of Xenophon,† they embody on a ground-

* This chapter was sketched, and a great part of it written, before I had seen Milman's History of Christianity. I hope it will not be deemed presumptuous, to express the pleasure I have derived from finding that I have frequently arrived at his conclusions, though not by the same line of reasoning. In a work like the present, it would be idle to discuss the question of plagiarism; coincidences of thought, and even expression, may be expected from those who investigate the same subject; and I should rather abandon all claim to originality, than be suspected of such folly as neglecting to avail myself of the researches of Mr. Milman.

† The author must record his dissent from Mr. Milman's estimate of the Cyropædia.

work of fact, the highest moral and religious notions to which man had attained, and shew the utmost ideal perfection of the divine and human nature, they can be accounted for, according to my judgment, on none of the ordinary principles of human nature. When we behold Christ standing in the midst of the wreck of old religious institutions, and building, or rather at one word commanding to arise, the simple and harmonious structure of the new faith, which seems equally adapted for all ages—a temple to which nations in the highest degree of civilization may bring their offerings of pure hearts, virtuous dispositions, universal charity,—our natural emotion is the recognition of the Divine goodness, in the promulgation of this beneficent code of religion; and adoration of that Being, in whom that Divine goodness is thus embodied and made comprehensible to the faculties of man. In the language of the apostles, God is in Christ, reconciling the world to himself."*

The great Revelation, which at once destroyed all the evils that arose from exclusive attention to the physical attributes of Deity, was contained in a single sentence—"GOD IS A SPIRIT, AND THEY THAT WORSHIP HIM MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH." This is an announcement that at once exalts Deity, and elevates humanity. God appears as a benignant Being, ready to forgive the sincere penitent, to receive him as a tender father would an erring child; but he is to be propitiated, not by sacrificial bribes, not by prostrations and servile homage, but by purity of soul; he claims the service of the mind, not of the body: he demands

* Milman's Christianity, i. 50.

the intellect with all its powers, and the heart with all its affections.* Neither birth, nor fortune, nor caste, nor colour, are required as qualifications for the favour and mercy of this Saviour: it is only necessary that the heart and soul should feel the want of his aid.

> Come unto me, all ye that labour and are burthened;
> And I will give you rest:
> Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;
> For I am meek and lowly in heart;
> And ye shall find rest unto your souls:
> For my yoke is easy, and my burthen light.†

But this invitation had reference not only to the life that now is, but also to that which is to come. An infinite existence was revealed at the close of our limited and transitory career, the peculiar character of which depended upon purity or impurity of conduct at this side of the grave. The importance and value of life itself was thus raised; it was no longer bounded and limited by "our little now," but was to be estimated

* It is rather strange that some of the German divines should assert that there is no reference to repentance, as a mental process, in the Old Testament; we take the two following passages, almost at random, in which the doctrine is set forth as clearly as possible:

Therefore also now, saith the Lord, *turn ye even to me with all your heart*, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and *rend your heart, and not your garments*, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.—Joel ii. 12, 13.

O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering. The *sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:* a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Psalm li. 15—17.

† Matt. xi 28, as arranged by the late Bishop Jebb, in his Sacred Literature.

in its relation to infinity and eternity. Thus then at length it could be said:

> Life is real! life is earnest!
> And the grave is not its goal;
> Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
> Was not spoken of the soul.

"My kingdom," says Christ, "is not of this world;" and during the whole course of his career, he carefully avoided any discussion which might lead to political subjects,* yet we shall find that never was there any political change at all comparable in extent and importance to that wrought in the world by the introduction of Christianity; and we shall also discover, by a little inquiry, that the action of Christ's disclaimer on the peculiar state of things then existing, was the very circumstance which to a great extent wrought this mighty political change.

* The case of tribute-money is not an exception. Christ perceived "the wickedness" of the Pharisees when they thought to involve him in a political dispute, which was one of the most cunningly devised snares ever laid by Jewish malice. His reply is not a rule of conduct, but a simple inference from existing circumstances. The right of coining has ever been the established symbol of sovereignty in Eastern countries, and consequently the Jews recognised Cæsar as their emperor by allowing his coin to be the regular currency of the country. The image on the coin, therefore, directly decided the question, for it shewed that the person represented was in possession of the supreme power, and that therefore it would be wise to pay taxes, unless there was some hope of successful revolt. His reply only suggested what was expedient under the circumstances of Palestine, but affirmed nothing one way or the other respecting the lawfulness of resistance. In fact we find in the Talmud that the Jewish doctors taught, that to admit the impression and inscription of any prince on the current coin, involves an acknowledgment of subjection to him; and every one who has studied oriental history, must know that this is an invariable rule throughout the East.

It is a remarkable peculiarity of Christianity, that its divine founder not only abstained from discussing general politics, but almost from every question which does not directly affect religion or morality: "Neither science, nor industry, nor law, whether civil or penal, nor the principles which govern the physical welfare of society and the well-being of nations, the exchange of their labour,—in a word, what we call political economy,—nor nature, literature or poetry, nor metaphysics proper, except in so far as they are connected with religion—for instance, the immortality of the soul, were ever discussed by Christ."* He has formed no system of ethics, he has not pointed out the moral relations of individuals to society and to each other; he has supplied motives and sanctions to our duties, but he has not discussed the nature and extent of obligation in any one form or aspect of society. "Our Lord and his apostles enforced such duties as were the most liable to be neglected,—corrected some prevailing errors,—gave some particular directions, which particular occasions called for,—but laid down *no set of rules* for the conduct of a Christian: they laid down Christian *principles* instead; they sought to implant Christian *dispositions*. And this is the more remarkable, inasmuch as we may be sure, from the nature of man, that precise regulations, even though somewhat tedious to learn, and burdensome to observe, would have been highly acceptable to their converts. Hardly any restraint is so irksome to man (*i.e.* to "the natural man") as to be left to his own discretion, yet still required to regulate his doctrine according to certain principles, and to steer his course through the intricate

* Lieber's Political Ethics, 404.

channels of life, with a constant vigilant exertion of his moral judgment. It is much more agreeable to human indolence (though, at first sight, the contrary may be supposed) to have a complete system of laws laid down, which are to be observed according to the letter—not to the spirit; and which, as long as man adheres to them, afford both a consolatory assurance of safety, and an unrestrained liberty as to every point not determined by them; than to be called upon for incessant watchfulness, careful and candid self-examination, and studious cultivation of certain moral dispositions."*

It must not, however, be inferred from this statement, as some have done, that the study of moral philosophy is either unnecessary or pernicious.† In the wide regions of moral action and peril which surround mankind, and which the progress of science every day enlarges, affording scope for the development of higher energies, and at the same time exposing us to new and untried temptations, it is well for us to study what rules of conduct have been sanctioned by the experience of ages, and how far they are in accordance with the voice of conscience and the precepts of revelation. No one can doubt the enormous influence

* Archbishop Whately on the Difficulties in the Writings of St. Paul, Essay v. Sec. 5. The reader will find a full account of the *moral instruction* of Scripture in the 2d, 3d, and 5th of his Grace's Essays on the Peculiarities of Christianity, and in the 8th Essay of the volume just quoted. He will there obtain the most complete examination that has yet appeared, of the motives inculcated—the examples proposed—and the precepts delivered.

† Many persons will believe such a caution unnecessary; but in my own experience I have found that many object to making moral philosophy a part of school-education, because they feared that the ethical text-book would supersede the New Testament.

of circumstances in the development of the passions, feelings, and moral principles: the Author of nature and of revelation has provided certain means for evolving our moral powers, but he has placed the means at our own disposal. We may employ them, we may pervert them, we may neglect them altogether; for neither the lessons of nature nor of revelation were designed to supersede the efforts of reason; — their proper purpose is to stimulate and guide the exertions of our faculties. "The fields, untilled," says a late writer, "will not produce the yellow corn—the uncultivated intellect cannot lay up stores of knowledge—nor will the heart reap spontaneous virtue or excellence."* There is a beauty in morality not less real than the loveliness of external nature; its charm is felt, even before we learn to distinguish virtue by its name; and which, even to the guilty, who have abandoned it, still retains a sort of beauteous but terrific aspect, which they would gladly forget, but which no effort can banish from their memory. It was this which dictated the sublime exclamation of the Stoic poet:

> Great Father of the Gods, when for our crimes
> Thou send'st some heavy vengeance on the times;
> Some tyrant-king the terror of his age,
> The type and true vicegerent of thy rage;
> Thus punish him: set virtue in his sight
> With all her charms adorn'd, with all her graces bright;
> But set her distant, make her pale to see,
> His gains outweigh'd by lost felicity.†

The study of moral science, in fact, becomes more necessary to us from the circumstances which render

* M'Cormac's Philosophy of Human Nature, p. 422.

† Persius. Satire iii. Dryden's Translation.

its absence in the Gospel-scheme evidence of the vast superiority of Christianity over every other system of religion. A set of rules propounded nineteen centuries ago in Judea would either have been so far in advance of the existing state of society as to be wholely inapplicable, or if it suited such a condition of humanity it could not be accommodated to present times without being so clogged, deformed, and altered, by interpretations, commentaries, explanations and additions, that like the Jews of old, we should inevitably "make void the commandments of God by our traditions." The experiment has been almost invariably tried in every system of human legislation; it is particularly manifest in Mohammedanism, where the traditions have very nearly superseded the Koran altogether as the source of the Moral Law. It is worthy of notice as a strange instance of human aberration, that this peculiarity of Christianity, the absence of systematic rules and observances, which renders tradition completely superfluous, is very generally the ground taken to establish the necessity of Christian tradition by the advocates of its authority.

I am not aware that it has ever been remarked as a peculiarity of Christianity, that its Founder does not dwell on the soothing and elevating sentiments to be derived from the contemplation of the power and wisdom of God as manifested in the works of creation, but I have been always accustomed to regard this omission as a strong mark and proof of the universality of the Christian religion. The force of such topics would depend greatly on climate, on the amount of civilization possessed by the nation, and the quantity of intelligence

in the individual hearers. Such lessons would have been limitations to Christ's instructions; but nothing that he has taught or ordained can be an obstacle to his religion being adopted at once, and by all classes of society; the lowliest slave may receive it as well as the mightiest sovereign—"the wayfaring man though a fool" is as little liable "to err therein" as the wisest philosopher.

Here again it is necessary to guard against being misunderstood. Christ, neither by precept nor example taught us indifference to the beauties, harmonies, and sublimities of nature; some of his most persuasive lessons and affecting illustrations were derived from those mute preachers, the flowers of the field,* "the lilies that toil not, neither do they spin," and yet are more gorgeously arrayed than Solomon in all his glory —the fields white with the ripened harvest—the vineyard with all its varieties of labour and enjoyment. A garden was his favourite resort for contemplation, and a garden was chosen for the place of his sepulture, amid the flowers which the American poet justly calls

> Emblems of our own great resurrection,
> Emblems of the bright and better land.

The asceticism which closes its eyes against the loveliness of nature, and which boasts that it can pass

* Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous,
God hath written in those stars above;
But not less in the bright flowerets under us
Stands the revelation of his love.
Bright and glorious is that revelation,
Written all over this great world of ours;
Making evident our own creation
In these stars of earth—these golden flowers.
Longfellow's Voices of the Night.

through the most picturesque and delightful scenery without deriving more pleasure from the landscape than could have been obtained from a journey in a sandy desert, is assuredly not any of the forms of piety recommended by "the Author and Finisher of our faith." On this subject I shall beg leave to extract an eloquent passage from a volume of essays, recently published by the Rev. Henry Woodward of Fethard. "There is a mere animal enjoyment of natural beauties, common even to those who are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. They can smell the fragrance of each herb and flower, inhale the balmy breeze of heaven, and cull the choicest of nature's fruits, and cool for a moment a feverish thirst at her streams of living water—and all this may be done as a mere gratification of the senses, as part of that round of animal enjoyments which form the whole of their existence.

"But in minds of another cast there is a habit of association formed, by which every pleasure that natural objects afford assumes the character of devotion. To them, to leave the calls and business of the world, and withdraw to the calm retreat and silent shade, is to pass at once into an element of communion with heaven. It is not that from a conscientious principle they seize the moment of disengagement to meditate on eternity, and pray to their Father who is in secret. No: it is because they see as it were, an impress of God upon the scene; and all that they behold speaks of him. It is with them none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven. Nature bears them upward by an unperceived and gentle motion, into the felt presence of nature's God. That this is not as some

would say, mere sentimentality, *I know:* for I have seen the feeling put to a test, at that solemn moment when false notions vanish like the chaff which the wind scattereth over the earth. It was my lot, many years ago, to attend a friend unspeakably dear to me upon his dying bed. He was one who loved all that is pure in nature, and who moreover loved the Lord his God with all his heart. But a few hours before his departure a bunch of his favourite flowers was brought to him. The sorrowing group around him watched with tender anxiety, to see whether he would notice, and in what manner he would now be affected by them. But they were not left long in suspense. For no sooner did he catch the well-known fragrance, than he lifted his eyes to heaven, and almost with his last breath exclaimed —Silent hymns."*

From the peculiarities we have noticed, it appears that Christianity preached to man, a spiritual God,—not attached to any nationality, whether of language, country, or custom,—the Father of all men, demanding the obedience of a child from each, and requiring each individual separately and for himself, to effect a renovation of all his moral feelings and principles of action. It was the first time that religion addressed itself to man in his personality, and recognised that every individual had a moral being of his own: but Christianity did more; it shewed that high responsibilities were attached to this individuality, and to it only, for it declared that the future eternity of happiness and misery would not be assigned by the Supreme Judge at the day of final reckoning on the ground of being born in

* Sequel to the Shunamite, p. 11.

a certain country or descended of a certain class, but on purity of soul, producing purity of life and conduct.

The moral value of the individual was thus immeasurably raised, and the influence of the state, as it existed in all the ancient systems of civilization, was diminished in nearly the same proportion. The state was no longer all, and everything; a wider and more extended sphere of activity was opened, beyond its limits, in man's direct relations to the Divinity, and consequently in his relations to all mankind, the children of the same heavenly Father. A twofold existence was bestowed on man at the same moment; he became something more than a citizen, he became *Himself*,—a moral being, called upon by the Almighty to fulfil his duties, and receive his reward according to his works; and while his moral responsibilities were thus restricted to his individuality, he received a new being in his moral sensibilities, which were no longer confined to a single state, but extended over the whole wide fellowship of humanity.

This revolution was neither social nor political, but it nevertheless contained the elements of important changes in all the relations of private life, and in all the departments of public administration. The recognition of individual rights was not confined to one sex. Woman became a moral being as well as man, and in her relations to the Deity, had an independent and equal existence with her lord. The relations between the sexes might not have been immediately changed by any open and public enactment, but the female sex was greatly elevated in influence and moral power. It is very probable that the greater freedom of thought

and action tacitly conceded to the Christian women may have suggested the charges of immorality brought against the early believers by their pagan adversaries; just as Mohammedans, on their first visit to England, are so shocked by the free exposure of the female face, that they believe and declare morality to be impossible in the country.

The slave was a still greater gainer. Christianity did not break his fetters, but it recognised him as equal with his master in the eye of God; and it taught the master that the slave was a man. The being hitherto regarded only as a piece of merchandize, regained his personality when he was brought within the sphere of Christian charity,—when he was confessed to be a sharer in the blessings of the same redemption, and a co-heir to the same glorious immortality. Christianity did not give him freedom, but it conferred upon him and upon his fellows the principles from which their freedom was eventually and necessarily derived.

When all national religions had made Rome their common metropolis, they neutralized each other. One power alone seemed real and independent—that of the emperor; and as a necessary consequence from the state-system of the ancients, this power was invested with the attributes of Divine Majesty. Temples were erected, altars dedicated, sacrifices offered, and oaths made to the emperor; an asylum was offered at his statues. In the general degradation, when alone such absurdities would be tolerated, there can be little doubt that the worship of the sovereign was, as Tertullian informs us, the most zealous and fervent, at least in outward show. Here, there was no religion of the

state, but religion and despotism were actually one. Such degradation could not be endured by man, conscious of his individuality and responsibility, taught to believe the equality of all men before God, and persuaded that the person who thus claimed the attributes of divinity should stand at the Last Day, unmarked and undistinguished, in the crowd assembled to hear their final doom pronounced by the Supreme Judge.

While man was part of the state, and nothing more, it was possible for him to remain ignorant of the deep degradation and slavish abasement of such homage to the personification of the state. It was far different when he learned that he had a separate existence, and an immortal soul. He saw that there was something beyond the state—higher, greater, more ennobling—and he no longer felt willing to sacrifice the state to the moral dignity of his nature. The narrow limits of the ancient communities had generated the corrupting principle, that individuals existed for the state; but the enlarging power of Christianity evolved the truth, that the state exists only for its members. This was a principle of life and liberty, under every and any form of government: absolutism was, as we have seen, a vice equally common to monarchies, oligarchies, aristocracies, and democracies, for the administrations of each might be, and was so directed, as to serve a party, no matter whether a minority or majority, by a sacrifice of the rights of the rest of the community; but Christianity raised the man above the citizen: no longer limited in his view to the precincts of a single community:—

> Man looked aloft, and with erected eyes
> Beheld his own hereditary skies.*

* Garth's Ovid, Book i.

The sense of personality, and the feeling of individual responsibility, are among the most ennobling and civilizing principles that could be suggested to man, but probably there is no element of civilization more difficult to be retained. It is ever necessary to have "the loins girded about, and the lamps burning," to be watchful and vigilant, lest the temptation of substituting dependence on others for personal exertion should prevail. Every great movement that has been made for the advantage of humanity, has been more or less frustrated by the natural propensity to keep out of view the necessity for individual labour. The forms in which this propensity appears, are as various as the pursuits of mankind. From the man of business, who hopes that by some prosperous traffic, or grand speculation, in which others shall bear the toil and he reap the profit, all the labour of life may be accumulated in a small portion of it, to the legislator who aspires to direct the affairs of a nation by blindly following in the tract of a leader, avoiding the toil of thinking— from the schoolboy who relies on his companion for the completion of his exercises, to the adult Christian who looks to his priest or his church for his salvation; all and each are eager to get rid of individual labour and personal responsibility, and to perform the duties of life by proxy.

"In all ages and all countries," says Archbishop Whately, "man, through the disposition he inherits from our first parents, is more desirous of a *quiet* and approving, than of a vigilant and tender conscience— desirous of *security* instead of *safety;* — studious to escape the *thought* of spiritual danger more than the danger itself; and to induce, at any price, some one to

assure him confidently that he is safe—to prophesy unto him smooth things, "and to speak peace, even when there is no peace.*

But this propensity is not peculiar to religion; it meets us everywhere — in literature, in science, in business and in politics; in every department, men are found anxious to be exonerated from the laws of industry and self-denial which they feel imposed upon them by their individuality, and to transfer their responsibility to a review, a teacher, a speculation, or a leader.

It is a well-known law of our nature, that passive habits are more readily developed than active habits, and also that they tend to check the growth of the latter. Pity is far more common than benevolence, credence than confidence, bravery than daring, speculation than enterprise; we too frequently confound those attributes together, because the passion or emotion is necessary to suggest the action; but it cannot be too often impressed upon us, that the indulgence of the emotion, without the corresponding action, is not only useless but pernicious.† It leads men to aspire to be

* Whately's Essays, Third Series, p. 130.

† Having already noticed the differences between active and passive habits in a former chapter, I have not dwelt upon them here; but I may quote, as a proof that sentimental pity is not necessarily allied to active benevolence, the following amusing sketch of the interior of a house in Strasburg, during the first French revolution, when the guillotine was in its most constant exercise:—"The walls were hung round with portraits of Robespierre, Marat, and the like; a great bust of Mirabeau, mutilated, with the word *Traître* underneath; lists and republican proclamations, tobacco-pipes and fire-arms. At a deal-table, stained with grease and wine, sate a gentleman with a huge pig-tail dangling down to that part of his person which immediately succeeds his back, and a red night-cap, containing a *tricolor* cockade

virtuous, charitable, humane, learned, or pious, by some means independent of their own exertions. It is a very marked peculiarity of Christianity, that its entire system, from beginning to end, is directed to check this tendency of our nature. Though the parable of the good Samaritan was likely to inspire *sentiments* of universal charity; the moral drawn from it is not sentimental charity, but active benevolence: "Go and *do* thou likewise." The necessity of personal exertion for "the working out of our salvation," is expressed in the very strongest term that language could supply: "Agonize* to enter in at the strait gate." In the parable of the ten virgins, the futility of vicarious religion is directly suggested, for the five foolish virgins would not have gone to sleep, unless they had expected some one to watch in their stead; and finally, the direct intent of the parable of the ten talents, is to display in the strongest light the necessity of personal exertion.

It is not the purpose of this work to enter into any discussion purely theological, but it is scarcely possible to examine those principles of Christianity which most influenced civilization, without incidentally touching on topics that have been the subject of much controversy,

as large as a pancake. He was smoking a short pipe, reading a little book, and sobbing as if his heart would break. Every now and then he would make brief remarks upon the personages or the incidents of his book, by which I could judge that he was a man of the very keenest sensibilities—'*ah brigand!*' '*oh malheureuse!*' '*oh Charlotte, Charlotte!*'"

It was the public executioner of the place, blubbering over the *Sorrows of Werter!*

* *Strive* in our English version, but when the authorized translation was made, *strive* had a more forcible signification than now, and one more in accordance with its substantive *strife*.

and in these points it is necessary to guard against the danger of misinterpretation.

When we assert that Christianity, by bringing forward man's individuality, tended to form habits of self-reliance and self-dependence, it is the farthest thing from our thoughts to say that it inculcates anything like self-righteousness. On the contrary, it distinctly declares that when we have done all, we should regard ourselves as unprofitable servants. But the act of so regarding ourselves is as much a portion of individuality as any other act, whether of mind or body. Christian faith is not speculative but practical, for every attribute of Deity revealed in it has some relation to man, and some reference to human conduct.* This in fact is one of the leading peculiarities of Christianity—that a full belief in it is not a speculative assent, but an active principle.

Among the idle questions discussed by the schoolmen in the Dark Ages, there was one which was a very great favourite with public disputants: "Whether is it ignition or ignited materials that constitute a fire?" A previous question should have been: can we conceive the existence of the one without the other? The greater part of the controversy respecting faith and good works is not unlike the scholastic dispute; for faith, in the Christian sense, is not a speculative belief, and still less an otiose assent, but something living, active, and practical. But how can life or activity exhibit itself, or even exist, but in action? and what is such action but works? Every one of the ancient examples of illustrious faith enumerated by St. Paul, is directly connected

* See Whately on the Peculiarities of Christianity, Essay iv. sect. i.

with the work in which that faith was embodied; as for instance, that of Abel and Abraham, in the sacrifices which they offered. Nor can we, on the other hand, ascribe goodness to any work irrespective of the motives that led to its performance. The robber recently mentioned in the newspaper, who relieved the distress of a pauper by the wayside, did not perform a good work, for his alms were designed as a bribe to prevent the discovery of the felony in which he was engaged.

Thus viewed, the controversy appears to turn on the distinction between an active principle, and its results in action; a process of refinement in abstraction, which seems of little practical value. The principle is indeed of more importance than the results, and hence a philosophic treatise on fire dwells at far greater length on the power or principle of combustion than on the phenomena exhibited by combustible materials, for these will vary with the several substances burned. In like manner, faith is more prominently set forth in Scriptures than good works, because good works must vary according to the several relations of mankind.

In what is called self-righteousness, we shall find that a very important part of self is omitted; namely, motive. The Pharisees, who deemed that they bought Divine favour by meritorious actions, adopted by this very principle a vicarious religion, for they substituted an external holiness of works for an internal purity of heart. The distinction is admirably illustrated by St. Paul, when he declares it possible for a man to bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and yet to be destitute of the principle of charity.

These observations are neither designed to raise nor

to explain controversy; their object is to guard against possible misapprehension of the importance we have ascribed to the recognition of man's individuality and personal responsibility; and the effects we have attributed to the doctrine, that man must *work* out his own salvation. "A careful and candid perusal of the Bible," says Archbishop Whately, "will sufficiently evince that at least the sacred writers themselves, were very far from conceiving that the doctrines they delivered were mere speculative matters of faith, unconnected with any change in the heart and conduct. If they inform us, that *the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men,* it is *to teach us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world:* when they describe to us, *God manifest in the flesh,* they instruct us to look to him with devout trust, and to shape our lives after the model of his perfections—*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus:* when they preach *Christ crucified,* it is that we, while *we crucify the old man, with the affections and lusts,* may yet with grateful humility, renounce all arrogant confidence in our own merits, and look for salvation to his sacrifice—his intercession, his spiritual aid: and that while we trust in the Divine mercy for the pardon of sin, we may not attribute this pardon, purchased by such a sacrifice, to his lightly regarding sin, but may be sensible of its deadly nature, and its odiousness in God's sight: when they announce his resurrection, it is that we may be exhorted also to rise from the death of sin to a life of holiness, that *being risen with Christ, we may set our affections on things above;* and may be encouraged to

look forward to a final victory over the grave: and when the love of God towards us is set forth, it is given as a reason why *we ought also to love one another*, and to testify our sense of his goodness by keeping his commandments."*

It is hoped that enough has been said to shew that by self-reliance and self-dependence, we mean trusting to what *we do* in opposition to what we *feel and believe:* for faith is a part of self, confidence in Christ's sacrifice and intercession is a part of self, humility is a part of self; and as they belong to the inner man, they are more essentially a part of self, than any external action whatever.

Man's sense of his own individuality and personal distinctness, is not an isolating but a social feeling; for man must have a sense of his own rights before he exhibits any respect or regard for the rights of others. The iniquitous system of special taxation,† for fitting out vessels of war, would never, and could never have been adopted by the Athenians, if every citizen felt that he had had personal rights, independent of the state. It was observed in the reign of Charles II., that those who had sold their own independence to the court, were the most stringent in preventing manifestations of independence among those subject to their influence; and every day's experience shews us, that those who think by proxy, are very impatient of freedom of thought in others. Among the early Christians, the sense of individual rights became a bond of affection, of which the connecting links were mutual respect, so

* Whately's Essays on Peculiarities of Christianity, Essay iv. sect. 5.

† Λειτουργία.

that it became quite a proverb—"Behold how these Christians love one another!"

We have endeavoured to shew that the great element of civilization developed by Christianity was the individual importance of man, the lesson, that man is not only a member of a community or part of a state, but that he is also separately and emphatically *himself;* and we have also added some explanations, not so much for the purpose of evolving all the important consequences that might be deduced from such a principle, as guarding against the danger of misinterpretation, and the deduction of inferences neither designed nor intended, which might arise from a less ample statement of the doctrine. It may now be permitted to inquire whether the five secondary causes, to which Gibbon ascribes the success of Christianity in his well-known Fifteenth Chapter, instead of being what he represents them, auxiliaries independent of Christianity, are not in fact results of the great principle which we have shewn to have been exclusively developed by Christianity itself. Such an inquiry is certainly connected with our subject; for the spread of Christianity was the outward manifestation of its influence on the condition of society, that is, on civilization.

The first cause assigned by the historian, is—"The inflexible, and if we may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit which, instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses."

This statement of a cause, instead of being a simple proposition, contains in it an insidious assumption

which will not bear the slightest scrutiny. What proof is there that Christian zeal emanated from Judaism? and how can its derivative character be assumed as self-evident, when it is confessed that the very essence and animating spirit of Jewish zeal was never an attribute of the Christian? The harmony and tolerance ascribed to paganism is a mere chimera: "a setter forth of strange gods" was regarded as a criminal in every ancient state; it was the charge brought against Socrates in Athens, and the Bacchanalians in Rome; it was repeatedly forbidden, not merely by augurs and pontiffs, but by decrees of the senate and edicts of the emperors. Foreign gods were nevertheless introduced, for no system of polytheism had sufficient strength to resist the encroachment of other systems; the harmony and toleration ascribed to the systems of paganism, were forced upon them by the irresistible force of circumstances; priests and rulers struggled against them, but they struggled in vain. Christian emperors overthrew heathen statues, forbade pagan practices, and sometimes inflicted civil penalties on idolaters: but Paulus Æmilius with his own hands wielded a hatchet to overthrow the altars of Isis and Serapis; the Roman senate forbade Lutatius to consult the Prenestine oracles, and Caius Cornelius ordered the Chaldæans to leave Italy within ten days under pain of death.*

The Christians may therefore have borrowed their zeal from the pagans just as easily as from the Jews; and they would have received it just as inflexible, and just as intolerant from one as from the other.

But Christian zeal was essentially different from that

* See Valerius Maximus, lib. iii. cap. 3.

of either Pagan or Jew. It was not connected with the glory or prosperity of a caste, country, or community; it sought to promote the happiness of man. Its inflexibility was the result of its individuality; it was within the man, and made part and parcel of his existence; its intolerance of other systems arose not from itself, but from them; because the direct purpose of every ancient system, was to crush and destroy man's individuality, to deprive him of all personality, whether civil or religious, and to merge him in the state. To comprehend the first manifestations of Christian zeal, we must see the zeal which animated the persecutors of Christianity. It was not a religious feeling, either with Jew or Pagan:—"The Romans will take away our name and nation;"—"A refusal of adoration to the emperor is disloyalty;"—"The fall of the old Roman religion involves that of the Roman dominion:"—such were the motives that urged Jewish priests, Roman emperors, and ignorant mobs to persecute the new religion. Assuredly the Christians could not tolerate any system which, in its very essence, was hostile to their existence: had they not overthrown Paganism, it would have destroyed them. Paganism, embodied in the state, demanded to be all and every thing, and it was, consequently, the exclusive principle. Christianity only required that something more than the state should be conceded to humanity; and it would be hard to call it intolerant, because it refused to submit to intolerance.

When we thus view Christian zeal, we find that it possesses no derivative marks—that on the contrary, it is strikingly original; and that it was naturally

evolved from a principle peculiar to Christianity—the strong assertion of man's individuality.

Gibbon's second cause is thus stated:—"the doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth." Though the historian does not assert that this cause was external to Christianity, but, on the contrary, acknowledges it to be a peculiarity of the Gospel system, he omits, or misrepresents the principle which gave that doctrine life and efficacy. He says, "When the promise of eternal happiness was proposed to mankind, on condition *of adopting the faith*, and of *observing the precepts of the* Gospel, it is no wonder that such an advantageous offer should have been accepted by great numbers of every rank and every province in the Roman empire." He does not tell us that this faith was something far beyond a speculative belief, and that these precepts were infinitely more than a ritual of outward observances, or an injunction of certain actions. He does not tell us that the condition was personal faith, personal holiness, purity of soul: not a condition to be effected by some means, once and for ever; but extending throughout the whole of life, and requiring perpetual vigilance for its full performance. It was this condition, which the historian has so strangely misstated—this direct demand on man, in his individuality, which gave the doctrine its vitality and force. It was not rendered acceptable to man, as the historian insinuates, by the facility of the conditions on which eternal salvation could be procured; for these conditions required perpetual vigilance and perpetual exertion; but it was rendered suitable to

man by evoking the slumbering energies, which alone could maintain such incessant labour and incessant caution.

The third cause mentioned by the historian, is,—"the miraculous powers ascribed to the Christian church." If the mere ascription of miraculous powers to any person or body would suffice to produce the effects which the historian enumerates, the followers of Simon Magus, of Apollonius Tyaneus, the Jewish exorcists, and the Roman sorcerers, should have possessed more influence than we know they ever attained. But the miracles wrought by our Lord, in at least a majority of instances, were not addressed to the nation or the world as mere attestations of his authority,—they were addressed to the heart as well as to the understanding, and conveyed a moral lesson, in addition to an evidence. Hence faith was required as a condition in those on whom the miracle of healing was wrought; and miraculous signs were refused to those who demanded them merely to gratify curiosity or satisfy doubt. Simple exhibitions of miraculous power could scarcely convince a perverse and wicked generation:—"If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." They would set about accounting for the phenomena by some popular theory, as the Jews actually did,—"He casteth out demons through Beelzebub, the chief of the demons." In almost every miracle of Christ, there is a direct reference to man's personality:—"Thy faith hath made thee whole,"—"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt." This peculiarity of Christ's miracles essentially distinguishes them from

all the signs and wonders to which impostors have laid claim. They were connected with man's individuality, and were not exhibitions of power, for the mere sake of display. The belief in them did not merely extort an involuntary assent to the doctrine taught, but made that doctrine influential on life and practice. Thus viewed, the ascription of such miraculous power to the Founder of the Christian faith, is a peculiarity of that faith, and intimately connected with its great civilizing element — the elevation of the personality and responsibility of every man for himself.

The fourth of Gibbon's causes is—"the pure and austere morals of the Christians." Two very distinct things are here classed together, purity and austerity, in all fairness it is necessary to treat them separately. Purity of life is conceded to the early Christians, and we have seen that the direct object of their system was to produce purity of heart and soul as the source for rectitude of conduct. But, says the historian with strange misapprehension, "the Christians allured into their party the most atrocious criminals who, as soon as they were touched by a sense of remorse, were easily persuaded to wash away in the waters of baptism, the guilt of their past conduct, for which the temples of the gods refused to grant them any expiation." This sentence is doubly false: it is untrue that expiation for the most monstrous crimes that can be conceived was refused in the heathen temples, and it is untrue that baptism was ever represented as a complete expiatory rite. I can find no historical evidence for the assertion, that the Christians "allured into their party the most atrocious criminals;" on the contrary, all the early converts whom

I have been able to trace by name, appear before their conversion, above the moral average of their Jewish or Pagan brethren. Furthermore, the inference deduced by the historian as an incontrovertible truth appears to me contradicted by all experience. He says, "as these criminals emerged from sin and superstition to the glorious hope of immortality, they resolved to devote themselves to a life not only of virtue, but of penitence. The desire of perfection became the ruling passion of their souls; and it is well known that while reason embraces a cold mediocrity, our passions hurry us with rapid violence over the space which lies between the most opposite extremes." This reasoning might be applicable, if Christianity were a vicarious instead of a personal religion; or if repentance were a mere change of action, and not of the principles of conduct. It is certainly true that many atrocious criminals, when the day of their execution drew nigh, terrified by the near approach of death and judgment, have persuaded themselves and others of the sincerity of their repentance. But what would have been the result, if this sincerity had been tried by a pardon? The colony in New South Wales could give a very mournful answer. It would be well if those who publish the narratives of such conversions, would reflect on the danger of representing Christianity as a spell or a charm, and not as a principle which should pervade the whole of man's existence.*

The purity of morals of the early Christian arose from his having purified the heart with its affections

* "One example of death-bed repentance," says an eminent divine, "is recorded in the Gospels, that none might despair; and only one, that none might presume."

and lusts; his perseverance was ensured, because his virtue flowed from a fixed principle, wrought into his consciousness, and forming a part of his personal and individual life. Gibbon ascribes the continued morality of the early converts, to zeal for the reputation of their limited sect. Had this been an influential motive, we should certainly have found it prominent in the exhortations of the Apostles, in their epistles to the churches, and in the writings of the early Fathers. But we nowhere find Christians invited to make their conduct creditable to the church, but "to walk worthy of God who had called them unto his kingdom and glory:" and still more emphatically is the exhortation to personal purity separated from pride of sect by St. Paul, "let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

This purity was not austerity; there is no doubt that austere practices were among the earliest corruptions of Christianity, and unfortunately, just as little, that they are among the latest. But so far were they from contributing to the success of the Gospel, that they did not acquire any strength until after the Gospel had become triumphant. Pliny's description of the early Christians represents their religious system as simple and cheerful, and assuredly there is no sanction for austerities in the New Testament.

The last of the five causes which we have to examine is—"the union and discipline of the Christian church, which gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman empire." The short answer to this assertion is, that in the early history of Christianity no such unity as that for which he con-

tends existed. It is one of the most remarkable peculiarities of Christianity, and as Archbishop Whately has shewn, one of the most signal proofs of its divine origin, that it contains no revealed system of articles of faith, no liturgy, and no ecclesiastical canons; in short, nothing that could hold together all Christians as a party, no provisions for uniformity of worship or discipline.* The churches were founded independently, and governed independently, long before they became a federative republic; and their federation was long maintained, on terms of mutual equality, before a claim was made to precedency by any. There was however a principle of union and discipline, deeply rooted in man's individuality—it was the love of the brethren, and the love of truth.

In closing this inquiry, it must not be concealed that the progress of Christianity was aided by external causes; the providential government of the world had prepared mankind for its reception; and thus the most influential cause of its success was also that of its revelation—"the fulness of the time was come."

* See Essays on the Peculiarities, Essay v.

CHAPTER IX.

EFFECTS PRODUCED ON CIVILIZATION BY THE CONQUESTS OF THE BARBARIANS AND OVERTHROW OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

THE histories of Greece and Rome are those of our instructors in the arts and sciences, our guides in literature, and our patterns in intellectual excellence: the history of what are called the Middle Ages is that of our immediate ancestors—it might almost be said, of ourselves. Less entertaining than the records of the classic nations, the latter history is far more instructive; for we are not the children of the Greeks and Romans, we are the children of their conquerors. With those whom we have been accustomed to call the barbarous hordes from the Northern hives, began the languages which we speak, the rights which we recognise, many of the laws which we obey, and many of the prejudices more powerful than law, that exercise the widest sway over human society. But the investigation of this period in the history of mankind is a task of considerable difficulty: at its most important crisis, the Roman system of civilization was in the last stage of decrepitude, and the Teutonic system in the first stage of childhood; the helplessness of old age was placed by the side of the helplessness of infancy, and our inquiries are to be made from the dying bed and the

cradle. Under these circumstances, it can scarcely be expected that within the narrow limits of a chapter it would be possible to trace all the events which moulded the form of society, and influenced its future progress; a few of the most striking particulars, such as most tend to illustrate the immediate subject of these volumes, can alone engage our attention.

Existing monuments prove that we generally form too low an estimate of the social condition of those nations described by the Greeks and Romans as barbarians. There can be little doubt that the Germans, the Gauls, and the Britons, were unpolished, but then they were a long way from being savages.

We have already shewn that the classic writers had formed no notions of civilization, or even civil polity, save in connexion with a city; even the Roman empire, through a long period of its duration, was little more than a federation of civic municipalities, subjected to the metropolitan supremacy of Rome. The rural population was of no account save when admitted to participate in civic rights; summary proceedings, not less stringent than the laws against fugitive slaves, were sanctioned by edicts of the emperors, to bring back by force the free peasants, who fled from their farms to escape the exactions of tyrannical lords.

We have more than once shewn that exclusiveness is the principle of falsehood in most of the opinions that have predominated over mankind. The limitation of the benefits of civilization to the civic populations was a pernicious falsehood in the ancient systems: the empires of the Babylonians, Saracens, Mongols, and Turks, not less than those of the Romans and Byzan-

tines, have shewn us, that there could be flourishing cities like Babylon, Bagdad, and Delhi, in degraded nations.

Among the Celtic and Teutonic nations, the form of whatever civilization they possessed was rural; this rendered it the more rude, but not the less real. The classical writers have not appreciated this social system, for it was based on a principle with which they were wholly unacquainted,—the sense of individual right,—and they called it barbarous, because it differed essentially from their own; but it is impossible to read the incidental notices of British manners in Cæsar's Commentaries, and the more ample account of the Germans given by Tacitus, without being led to exclaim with Pyrrhus, "these barbarians are far from being barbarous," or at least feeling that they never sunk into the deep degradation of some African and Oceanic tribes. This indeed is what should reasonably have been expected, from the account given in former chapters of the origin of civilization. "Each savage tribe," says Archbishop Whately, "having retained such arts as are most essential to their subsistence in the particular country in which they are placed, there is accordingly, generally speaking, somewhat less of degeneracy in many points in the colder climates; because these will not admit of the same degree of that characteristic of savages, improvidence. Such negligence in providing clothing and habitations, and in laying up stores of provisions, as in warm and fertile countries is not incompatible with subsistence in a very rude state, would, in more inhospitable regions, destroy the whole race in the course of a single winter."*

* Whately's Political Economy, p. 118.

In estimating the influence on modern times of the civilization preserved by the northern tribes, it will be sufficient to examine the Teutonic race alone; for the Celtic and Sclavonic races were conquered by the Romans, and merged in the general system of the empire. With the Teutonic races, the first and moving principle was the personal independence and dignity of man, and consequently they were strict in the maintenance of individual rights. The power of the kings was limited by the *mallum*, or assembly of the people; but the power of the state, that is, of the king and *mallum* united, was not absolute over the members: the obnoxious individual, from whom the society withdrew its protection, was allowed to seek admission into some other society; exile, not death, was the severest punishment which it was deemed competent for the supreme power to inflict. The Germans were as tender of the lives of citizens* in peace, as they were unsparing of the lives of their enemies in war.

The Teutonic tribes were honourably distinguished from nearly all the ancient races by their high respect for women, whom they treated as the partners of their life and counsels. Though religious, they were not subservient to their priests, and with them the sacerdotal order never acquired such political influence as the Druids are said to have possessed among the Celtic races. They had some imperfect mode of recording events by rude characters traced on stones or stocks of

* We have no word but "citizen," to express membership of a political community. I have preferred using it here, though the Germans had no cities, to coining such a phrase as "tribe-man," or "horde-man;"—"clansman" would lead to a total misapprehension of the argument.

trees; and though they had no sciences, properly so called, they were acquainted with the use of metals, and were particularly skilful in the manufacture of military weapons.

Though individuality is an important and even necessary element of a complete system of civilization, yet it, like every other element, becomes false and pernicious when associated with a principle of exclusiveness. And it may be added, that when thus perverted, when individuality concentrates itself into selfishness, it is far more false, and far more pernicious, than sociality in its worst and most exclusive form.

War has ever been the most demoralizing cause that has operated for the ruin of every system of society. But the spirit of war, acting as a personal instead of a national motive, transforms man into a demon. It would be absurd to deny the enormities of war on an extended scale, the horrors of the battle-field, the desolation of smiling fields and happy homes, the breaking of widows' hearts, the consigning of helpless orphans to vice and destruction, and the extension of the curse to unborn generations, by taxing their industry to pay the price of inflicting misery on their forefathers. Nevertheless, the world regards this wholesale carnage with far less horror than the contests between small bodies, when each individual has his personal feelings staked in the issue. In wars on a grand scale, there is little to interest the soldier individually; he feels for the honour of his country, his army, or his regiment, not for the gratification of his own anger or revenge. But even in modern warfare, whenever the individual passions of the soldiers are roused, as for instance, in the

storming or sack of a town, the result is more horrible than would be the unchaining of so many tigers; and the mischief is not to be measured by the numbers of the dead, but by the demoralization of the living. It seems a paradox, but a very little reflection will prove its truth, that the extent of a war is the only alleviation of its horrors, for though more destructive to human life generally, it spares moral life in the survivors. *

The individuality cultivated by the Teutonic tribes, both prompted them to frequent wars, and rendered them most susceptible of its demoralizing influences. Had they been left to their own system of civilization, thus at once stimulated and corrupted, there can be little doubt that the history of Europe would have closed in one dark night of barbarism, or if I may use such a word, of savagery. But in the wide-spreading desolation, some social principles, or rather institutions, escaped total destruction, and became rallying points for the relics of humanity.

To one principle, and one institution, Europe was mainly indebted for its preservation from the ruin that overspread the Eastern provinces when assailed by a similar calamity. That principle was Christianity, and that institution was the Christian church. That the corruption of Christianity had commenced before the fifth century cannot be questioned; indeed, St. Paul

* It can scarcely be necessary to state, that I do not by any means contend that all wars are unjustifiable; on the contrary, I hold that in many cases they are eminently laudable. But still I consider that war is not less an evil because it is an unavoidable one. On the religious point of the question I may add, that I have always considered wars to be a part of the means by which the inscrutable designs of Providence in the moral government of the universe are accomplished.

had in his Epistles pointed out the birth of many errors, and stigmatized them with a strength that could only be derived from prescience—which nevertheless subsequently attained a pernicious and mighty growth.* But it must be observed, that nearly all the novelties that had then crept into the faith, were of a stern, severe, and in some cases a belligerent character, and were therefore not perilous in the long period of wars and commotions. Had the faith of the Latins been so thoroughly corrupted as that of the Syrians was at the time of the Saracenic invasion, nothing short of direct miraculous inteference could have saved Christianity from being absorbed in Northern paganism. The church, a body without a soul, might have rallied adherents around it, but not believers; and in such a case, the ardour of its supporters would last while it was profitable, and not a moment longer. But faith was still strong—it had not been yet dissevered from knowledge; it had neither degenerated into mysticism on the one hand, nor indifference on the other; Christians were yet untaught, that orthodoxy was a substitute for personal holiness, or that a ritual of external observances would stand instead of the homage of the soul and understanding.

Moreover, much of the original purity of Christianity was brought back in the moment of danger: the tares

* In the whole of this section I find myself, very unwillingly, at issue with M. Guizot: he ascribes the whole conservative efficacy of Christianity at this period to the church, and regards the principle of Christian faith as inoperative. I think that his own examples of the Syrian and African churches prove the direct contrary. May I be permitted to add, that I record this dissent with all the deference due from a scholar when he differs from his master.

were planted when men slept, but no more could be added when they were roused by the perils that approached. In the scanty records of the time, we find more examples of personal devotion and personal zeal, than had appeared since the final subversion of paganism.

But, in the fearful storm that was coming, it was necessary that this principle, however strong, should be embodied in an institution. Viewing merely human causes and considerations, it is scarcely possible that any faith which had not a material existence, which did not manifest itself visibly, palpably, and substantially, could have resisted the successive tides of barbarism that rolled over Europe. If it had not possessed a hierarchy, a government, a system of law, an organized existence, individual convictions would have been dispersed and lost, because when once scattered, there was no rallying point round which they could be again assembled. The conservative functions of the Christian church during the invasions of the barbarians, appear to me to have been admirably typified in a late exhibition at the Diorama. The picture represented a Swiss village by moonlight, with those silent signs of life in repose, the decaying embers of the household fire, and the twinkle of a solitary candle in the sleeping apartment: the scene changed, an avalanche descended, and morning dawned over one wide, dreary expanse of desolation. But the spire of the church-steeple peered still above the snow, marking the spot where beauty had been, and pointing out the road to the relief of suffering humanity.

But it was not Christianity alone that gained by the conservative strength of the church in this unhappy

period; every essential of ancient civilization which survived the storm, was preserved by the ecclesiastics; the forms of settled government, the principles of civil law, and all the elements of moral power which enable human improvement to resist the predominance of physical force. When all human laws were merged in the right of the strongest, the Christian church proclaimed that there was a law, superior equally to the institutions of legislators and the power of conquerors; and it not only preserved the ideas of morality and order, but gave them permanence and perpetuity, by investing them with the sanction of religion.

The church, in the fifth century, not only preserved the elements of former civilization, but evolved others from itself, which were pregnant with great benefits to humanity. Among these, the most prominent and the most valuable was the separation of the spiritual power from the temporal, a principle which forms the only sure basis of liberty of conscience. "This separation virtually asserts that physical power has neither a right nor a hold on the mind, on conviction, or on truth."* It negatived the pagan principle, that the government has a right to choose a religion for the people; and it gave additional prominence to the great principle which we examined in the former chapter, that it is not a state, nor a class, nor a community, nor an institution, that is responsible for the faith or practice of an individual, but only the individual himself.

We do not mean that this principle was evolved in its full strength and clearness by the Christians of the fifth century—it has scarcely yet attained such a con-

* Guizot, Cours d'Histoire Moderne, p. 90.

summation; but no one can read attentively the writings of the Fathers, or the codes of Theodosius and Justinian, without finding this great truth struggling and making its way through the surrounding mass of errors and falsehoods.

It is not less important to trace the origin of the errors which corrupted Christianity, than the elements of civilization which that religion conferred on humanity. In doing so, it is above all things necessary to guard against a spirit of controversy and sectarian bitterness; and for this purpose, we must keep steadily in view the imperfections to which human nature is subject in the formation of its opinions, and the liability to error, not only in others but in ourselves.

We hold it demonstrable, that for all the errors which have ever corrupted Christianity, the church was never responsible as an institution, and the clergy very rarely as a body. These corruptions were either an inheritance from former ages, or the necessary result of particular circumstances; they originated not with the clergy, but with the whole mass of society, and in a great majority of instances, they were forced on the ecclesiastical body by the laity. The precise charge against the clergy in the worst of times should be, not that they originated delusions, but that they fostered, encouraged, and propagated those delusions, which were proved by experience to be profitable to themselves individually, or to their order collectively.

The progress of the human mind is not from truth to error, and from error to truth—it is from one truth to another: or to speak more accurately, from truth seen under one aspect, to the same truth seen under

another and a different aspect. If any age possessed the entire of truth, beauty, or justice, then science, art, and morality would be fixed eternally; and there would never be a change of opinion in the world. It is a necessity of our nature to believe what is true and to reject what is false, provided *we know* what is the true, and what the false. Responsibility for our faith does not rest on the belief or the conviction produced by evidence, but on the honesty and diligence with which the evidence is selected and arranged. Belief is involuntary, but the knowledge on which belief is founded remains to a great extent under the dominion of the will. The errors of credulity are not in the deduction of the conclusion from the premises, but in the adoption of a foregone conclusion, independent of argument.*

There never was an age which did not derive some of its opinions from the age immediately preceding:—as one generation springs from another, yet differs from its progenitor in character by the force of the circumstances which surround it; so does one opinion emanate from another, and receive a new mould and form from external causes. This is by no means the doctrine of fatalism; for as each generation had the opportunity of advancing itself by its inherent energies, so each opinion contains the elements of its own purification, in the partial truth on which it is founded. When we hunt out the origin of an error, we trace its parentage to other errors, and these again to a similar ancestry,

* "Non persuadebis etiamsi persuaseris," was an honest confession, and so far am I from blaming the worthy father by whom it was uttered, that I should gladly see his candour imitated by all who have adopted the same principle; that is to say, by ninety-nine out of every hundred who ever engaged in any controversy, small or great.

until at length we get back to the origin of humanity itself; which being feeble, sees only a partial view of truth, and being proud, believes and proclaims that its partial conceptions are truth in its entireness and completeness.

When therefore we stigmatise error, it must be borne in mind that we do not affix moral culpability to those by whom that error was held, though we are far from saying that they were all immaculate. Viewing the history of opinions, we find tolerance not the performance of a duty, but the avoidance of an absurdity, for we can nowhere fix the responsibility of error.

The first great corruption of Christianity was the growth of a theocratic spirit: after having separated spiritual and temporal power by depriving the state of the former, the ecclesiastical body again attempted to confound them, by aiming at the possession of the latter. This new confusion did not arise from Christianity, for the declaration of its Founder, "My kingdom is not of this world," was prominently brought forward by the Church in all its early struggles. Neither was it borrowed from the Jewish scheme of Theocracy, which was based on inheritance and a system of caste. It was manifestly derived from the traditions of the Pagan empire—the idea of Imperial majesty, of sacred and absolute central power, which, as we have seen, grew up in the centre of polytheism, when national religions were neutralized, and national governments subjected to a metropolitan jurisdiction. The Pagan origin of the sentiment is obvious enough in the arguments by which it was supported; but we must not be surprised that it survived the empire, and even

acquired greater strength after its fall—for the value of a principle of unity is nowhere so strongly felt as in a world of countless miseries produced by repeated distractions.

But the vague notion of imperial majesty would scarcely have evolved itself into the idea of theocracy, had it not been combined with other circumstances, which tended to invest the clergy with magisterial power. We have seen that the Roman empire was to a great extent a federation of municipalities, and the Christian community a federation of churches. As no form of ecclesiastical government had been established by the great Founder of our faith, the early Christians actually established the system with which their previous habits had rendered them familiar, and the constitution of every church was in a great degree derived from that of the municipality where it was located. There is very little analogy between the constitution of the Christian church and that of the Jewish synagogue; the separation between them was made at too early a period, and the hostility of the latter was too violent, to admit of its becoming a guide and precedent.

In examining the differences between the hierarchies of the Greek and Latin churches, the inquirer will find most difficulties removed by comparing them with the differences between the Byzantine and Roman empires. The Greek church exhibits more of the subordination of a monarchy; the Latin, more of the independence of federated corporations. The cause is sufficiently obvious; neither had a divine rule to direct them in the formation of their ecclesiastical constitutions, and both therefore took their forms of government from the political forms by which they were surrounded.

But Christianity was introduced at a time when the municipalities, though preserving their ancient forms, were fast losing their ancient influence. The harassing demands of Imperial despotism, the dangers to which magistrates were exposed in the time of invasion, and the decay of civic revenues, produced discouragement and apathy in the *Curiales*, or members of the municipal bodies. On the other hand, the bishops and clergy were full of life, zeal and energy, the power abandoned by the corporations fell naturally into their hands, and they were summoned by the simple force of circumstances to assume the direction and superintendence of their respective communities; had they not done so, anarchy would have been the inevitable result.

The Christian emperors naturally addressed precepts and edicts to official persons, bound by community of religious feeling to support them against pagan rivals, and also possessing such influence over the people as to insure obedience to the sovereign's mandates. In many cities the clergy were the only organized body, in all they were the most influential, for they alone retained moral strength when every thing was moldering around them. It would be unjust to tax them with usurping political power; the power was forced upon them by the irresistible course of circumstances.

In the accusations brought against clerical ambition, it is forgotten that individuals and corporate bodies may be placed in such a position as to be compelled to exercise political power whether they like it or not. Gustave de Beaumont, in his late work on Ireland, severely reprobates the government for appointing clerical justices of the peace, quite forgetting that this

is unavoidable where the clergyman is the only resident gentleman in the district. Every one would confess it to be improper that laymen should usurp clerical functions; but every one at the same time acknowledges the propriety of naval and military officers marrying, burying, and baptizing, reading the church-service, and affording religious instruction, in ships, and stations where the aid of a chaplain cannot be obtained.

Ecclesiastical municipalities gradually superseded the old Roman municipalities, and whether the change was for the better or the worse, it was one that could not be avoided. The possession of power is naturally dear to all men, and consequently there can be little doubt that the clerical body became eager to retain the authority thus thrust upon them; but if we look into the legislation of the period, we shall find that the emperors were far more anxious to extend the civil functions of the clergy than any members of the clerical body. Justinian was as anxious to place the details of the government under episcopal control, as Lord Brougham was to manage every thing by barristers of five years' standing. We find that he entrusted to the bishops, in their respective dioceses, the regulation of expenses for public works, the guardianship of wealthy orphans, and the selection of the civic militia.*

The political character acquired by the ecclesiastical body became the source of much abuse, but we have now seen that this character was superinduced by circumstances extrinsic to Christianity, and that in its origin it was neither an abuse nor an usurpation. It was a natural result of the Roman system of municipa-

* Justinian's Code, book i. titles iv. and lv.

lities, and from the accident of its origin, it gave life and strength to the vague notion of the majesty and sanctity of the empire. The combination of both ideas may be traced in the various unhappy efforts to establish a Christian theocracy, which may be found in the ecclesiastical history of the middle ages.

Many of the minor corruptions of Christianity may equally be traced to the traditions of paganism. The passion for the occult sciences was, as we have seen, evolved in the decline of polytheism: the philosophic initiations described by Apuleius, and the ascetic practices imported into Europe from the remote and gloomy superstitions of the East, were clearly the origin of monastic habits, of extravagant penances, and the un-Christian notion of works of supererogation. The verbal trifling which represented the question of man's salvation as turning on a vowel or a dipthong, was derived from the subtleties of the Greek sophists, who employed their time in such verbal disquisitions as those preserved to us by Aulus Gellius;* and finally, the extraordinary jumble of all religious creeds, and all philosophic sects, in the schools of Alexandria,† produced the scholastic philosophy, in which perverted religion, misapplied science, and the distorted allegories

* Socrates had set the example of these quibbling verbal disquisitions, as the reader will find, if he has patience to read the Cratylus of Plato.

† "The population of Alexandria," says the author of the Epicurean, "consisted of the most motley miscellany of nations, religions, and sects, that had ever been brought together in one city. Beside the school of the Grecian Platonist was seen the oratory of the cabalistic Jew; while the church of the Christian stood undisturbed over the crypts of the Egyptian Hierophant."

of the East were blended together in inextricable confusion.

The invasions of the barbarians lasted from the fifth to the tenth century, and during this whole period all the elements of society were in a chaotic state: there were no permanent frontiers, governments, or nations; it was one wide confusion of principles, races, languages, each seeking to acquire permanence in institutions, but failing because it could not gain supremacy over the rest. So long as wave after wave of barbarians rolled down upon Europe, institutions were swept away almost as soon as established; so long as the state of war endured, the Teutonic principle of individuality tended to produce a state of savage isolation. The first effort made to restore order that had any chance of success, was one suggested by the necessity of the times, and for that very reason deeply imbued with their vices and imperfections; and this was the establishment of the Feudal system.*

That the feudal system was necessary to Europe, is proved by its universal adoption: it gave, what it alone could probably have supplied, permanence of social position to the individual, and permanence of social institutions to the community. The relation between a vassal and his lord was defined, and it was adopted because there was no other definite relation in Europe. Clergy and congregation, king and subjects, aristocracy

* The slight differences between the account of the feudal system given by M. Guizot and that adopted in the following pages, are scarcely worthy of notice. I have dwelt more largely on the physical effects as causes of moral influence, than the great professor: but I believe that every one of my views has been more or less suggested by his work.

and people, republic and commonweal, were relations of which some individuals may have had vague notions, but they were unknown to the great mass of mankind, and very imperfectly comprehended, even by those who had taken them into consideration. Hence these relations were strangely disguised under a feudal form. The church, the municipalities, royalty itself, became feudal; without, however, losing the original principle of their institution, for each in its proper sphere began to struggle against feudality, from the very moment that it had adopted the forms and sanctioned the power of the feudal system.

M. Guizot is inclined to believe that the notion of legitimacy was evolved before the triumph of feudalism, and that it arose during the chaotic struggle of principles for supremacy, which has been already described. The idea of legitimacy has been too influential in the European system of civilization to be passed over lightly: we think that its devolopment must chiefly be attributed to the permanence of ecclesiastical organization amid surrounding changes; and to the same cause we attribute the notion of sanctity, with which it is very generally associated.

M. Guizot strenuously contends that legitimacy has been always part and parcel of the notion of government; and to a certain extent he is undoubtedly right. But the legitimacy of modern Europe is a far more comprehensive, definite, and moral opinion, than that which loosely entered into the elements of Grecian and Roman civilization, and than that which can be traced in the social systems of Asia. It ascribes a divine sanction not to one institution but to all; it

attributes a sacred right to monarchies, aristocracies, and democracies; to episcopacy, presbyterianism, and congregationalism; and it claims respect for every established form, not merely, as M. Guizot seems to imagine, in right of its antiquity, but because the rectitude, the justice, and the virtue of the form, are supposed to be proved by the experience of ages. The Church was the first permanent establishment of modern Europe: for four centuries it alone maintained the struggle against barbarism; it preserved, as we have seen, the memory of municipal freedom and Roman majesty in temporal government, and actually established both in spiritual affairs; and by working on ignorance, superstition, and barbarity, unfortunately with means too closely adapted to the materials of the operation, it obtained a mastery over the energies of the Northern tribes, and not unfrequently the guidance and direction of their movements. Such a power was legitimated, not merely by its continuance, but by its usefulness; and from the church, temporal authority was, almost at the outset, forced to borrow its sanctions and derive its legitimacy.

From this examination it follows that the legitimacy in the European social system is a *reasonable* opinion; and so far is it from being a conclusive argument against discussion, that it seems actually to challenge investigation and court inquiry. But the notion became greatly changed under the influence of feudalism,—it was associated with the principle of inheritance, and it gave a great additional security to estates and families. But at the same time a principle of corruption was introduced into the application of the idea; legitimacy

was applied only to the existing distribution of wealth and power, and its sanctity was usually refused to new creations of either. Property in land, for instance, was sacred, while property in trade was exposed to every species of vexation and embarrassment.

Feudalism produced a physical change in the condition of society, fraught with very important consequences. It transferred political supremacy from the towns to the country, and from a corporate aristocracy to isolated nobles. In the long and cruel wars of the Northern invasion, the cities had suffered more severely than the rural districts, because they had more wealth to attract the cupidity of the conquerors; their supremacy and rule over the surrounding country were destroyed; and commercial wealth, which subsequently became the means of restoring their influence, was very slowly produced. In this situation almost every town courted the protection of the nearest noble, and the citizens neglected the use of arms, entrusting the care of their defence to their feudal lord; and thus the municipalities fell gradually into decay.

Feudalism encouraged the virtues most intimately connected with man's individuality; personal heroism, loyalty and domestic affection,—but it in a more than equal degree, cherished the corresponding vices of sanguinary brutality, disregard of rights beyond its limited sphere, and the limitation of social ties to the family of the noble. There was little sympathy between the noble and his vassal, unless when the latter became a military retainer; and there was no external power to intefere, when the lord abused his sovereignty over his hapless serfs.

The system was perfectly hostile to social order of every kind. All the ancient aristocracies and oligarchies were corporations; the Roman patrician felt for his class or order more than for himself; but in the feudal ages, we find no instance of the lords acting as a body with common purpose and for common interests. Each was opposed to the sovereignty of the monarch and the freedom of the people; but this opposition was merely a personal feeling, and when a bribe was offered either by a king or by an association of citizens, a noble readily sold the elements of his feudal strength, without ever reflecting that he thus weakened the entire body of the aristocracy. The nobles of France did not organize a common and united system of resistance to the encroachments of the crown, until the power of the monarch had been so firmly established that resistance was unavailing.

Chivalry, as it is represented by writers of romance, never existed in Europe; but when the feudal system began to decline, the nobles adopted conventional rules, for the purpose of maintaining the dignity and supremacy which they had previously held without an effort. Knighthood as a principle of association was not evolved from chivalry, but was forced upon it by the pressure of external circumstance. The chivalrous literature by which the virtues of feudalism were exaggerated and its vices concealed, is the production of a still later period, and may very fairly be characterized as a system of audacious misrepresentation.

The Teutonic element of civilization was in its essence a dissociating principle, and consequently it was the very opposite of that which had ruled the ancient world.

It was apparently a retrogradation to anarchy; and if it had run its course unchecked, Europe must have sunk into complete barbarism. The nobles would have been gradually assimilated to the petty chiefs and kings of Africa; the commons would have been herds of slaves. Feudalism, however, was only the severe apprenticeship of European society; it was perhaps a necessary, though afflicting ordeal, through which humanity should pass, before the errors derived from the traditions of imperial Rome could be effaced. But even in the moment of its most absolute sway, there were causes at work, undermining the feudal system, against which the nobles, equally ignorant and disunited, could adopt no efficacious measures, even if they had discovered them; the discovery, however, was not made: the feudal lords did not suspect that their power was menaced, until the government was actually wrested from their hands.

This indeed is always the attribute of an ascendency when society is in a state of transition; and it is some consolation to the defeated party, that, like the Turks in Constantinople, they may retain the belief in their own superiority long after the fact is evident to all but themselves that their supremacy has been destroyed for ever.

CHAPTER X.

PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION IN EUROPE DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

FEUDALISM was forced upon Europe as the only system which could avert the impending danger of anarchy; but many of the systems which assumed a feudal form, still retained their distinguishing principles, and even when the feudal pressure was greatest, were secretly maturing the means for a struggle against its power. The most powerful of these opponents of the dissociating tendencies of feudalism, was the Christian church: it preserved within it the ideas of order, law, morality; the equality of all men before God; and the immutable principles of justice. It may be said, without we hope giving offence to anybody, that the church had in these ages greatly fallen from its original purity, both in doctrine and in discipline, and that there were few among the clerical body in the eleventh century whom the Apostles would have recognised as brothers. But we trust that it may be equally said without offence, that to the church as then constituted, and to the clergy as then organized, humanity owes a deep debt of gratitude, for fighting and winning the battle of freedom and civilization. There is probably no part of the Romish creed, and not one of the Romish institutions, that was not of vast importance in the great struggle which the church had to maintain; and of the doctrines

and practices on which the nineteenth century passes just sentence of condemnation, there is scarcely one which could have been spared, seven hundred years ago, without imminent peril to the great cause of human civilization and social happiness. In the great majority of instances, the errors were forced upon the ecclesiastical body; and in all the rest, the error arose from attempting to render universal some formulary that had been devised for a special purpose.

The feudal nobility was isolated, not merely as a body, but individually; the church linked itself with every class of society. The bishops were the companions of princes, the priests claimed reverence in the baronial hall, the preaching friars and monks brought consolation to the cottage of the suffering peasant—thus everywhere offering a strong contrast between sacerdotal universality and feudal exclusiveness. When distinctions as rigid and more onerous, because more obviously artificial than *caste*, were established in every form of social life, the church scarcely knew any aristocracy but that of talent: once received into holy orders, the serf lost all traces of his bondage; he was not merely raised to an equality with his former lord, but he might aspire to dignities which cast those of temporal princes into the shade. Under such circumstances, the church was inexpressibly dear to the suffering people, and an object of jealousy, not unmingled with hatred, to the feudal tyrants. The ecclesiastical power was daily increasing, as its benefits were more sensibly experienced; the right of sanctuary—in late ages one of its worst abuses, but in the days of unlicensed passions one of its most beneficent institutions—soon placed the church in an

attitude of hostility to the nobility, and gave the signal for a struggle, in which the latter body, for the first time, learned to estimate the importance of the people.

In every age, and in every land, a church exposes its purity to imminent peril by taking the lead in any political struggle: defeat is its ruin, and victory its corruption. It suffers equally in its collective capacity and in its individual members, for the union of the priest and the demagogue forms a character dangerous to the peace of society. But history presents us no instance of such a condition becoming general, save when there is a popular opinion that substantial wrongs exist, against which the members of the sacerdotal order are the only persons able or willing to find a remedy. Such an opinion was formed throughout Europe by those who groaned under feudal domination, and the people could not reasonably be blamed for seeking protection from the priests, when their lords, or rather the lords of their soil, left them no other refuge. It was clearly a matter of necessity, that the church should be kept independent of the temporal power, at a time when the temporal power crushed into ruin every thing that came within its grasp.

The power of the papacy, as an institution, was directly proportioned to the strength of the opinion on which it was founded, and the strength of that opinion must be measured by the circumstances by which it was engendered. It is necessary to keep this philosophic truth steadily in view, because one of the most common arguments urged against the civilizing influences of Christianity, is the alleged delinquencies of the church in the Middle Ages. But if we take into consideration

the nature of the times in which these delinquencies are said to have occurred, we may perhaps discover that what we have censured merits our eulogy, and what we have scorned deserves our gratitude. It is not enough to shew that Christianity as first taught, was a blessing: we must further shew that throughout the whole course of its history, it has been a benefactor to humanity.*

The dispute about investitures was an attempt on the part of the German feudality to bring the church under its subjection; we may concede, that in the abstract, the emperors were right and the clergy wrong, and we may at the same time contend, that the success of the emperors, at that precise period, would have been productive of the worst consequences. The temporal power of princes required to be checked, not strengthened—it was vacillating between anarchy and oriental despotism, and any increase of its force would have fixed it in one or other of these positions. Public opinion, so far as it existed, was therefore inclined to support the ecclesiastical rather than the civil power, and that opinion was energetically represented by

* In the controversial works of some Protestants, the importance of this truth has been often forgotten, and infidelity has gained in consequence. It would be well if, in the heat of argument, persons would remember that the errors of Romanism are not absolute falsehoods, but corrupted truths; and that in the rage for sweeping condemnation, they may pass sentence on the truth, when they merely mean to stigmatise the falsehood. In the particular instance to which reference is made in the text, some have written as if the world would have been better without any church in the Middle Ages; it seems, therefore, not unnecessary to point out the services which the church, however corrupt, was still able to render to the great cause of human advancement.

Hildebrand, or Gregory VII. as he was called, after his accession to the papacy.

This celebrated pontiff has been described on one side as an eminent saint, and on the other as a species of moral monster, opposed to all improvement. There is no doubt that a pope, possessing anything like his influence, who would propose, and strive to enforce, the same measures in the nineteenth century, that Gregory did in the eleventh, might be justly stigmatised as one of the worst of despots, but for his claim to rank among the most pre-eminent of blockheads; but if we judge Hildebrand by the standard of his own age, we shall see that every one of his measures counteracted some evil principle, and helped to work out some antagonizing element of civilization.

Gregory VII. was not less of a reformer than Luther; and were we at liberty to digress, it would be easy to shew many striking points of similarity between the characters of these great men. It is true that Gregory attempted to work out his reformation by despotic means, but there were no others at his disposal: he was in the ecclesiastical world what Charlemagne, Peter the Great, and Napoleon, have been in the political; so eager to accomplish a great and good end, that he trampled on every intervening obstacle, even when the impediment was an innocent or even useful institution. He wished to reform the church, and by means of the church to reform civil society—to introduce more morality, justice, and order into both;—he possessed all the firmness resulting from a consciousness of rectitude, for banished and dying, he never for a moment despaired of his cause, or doubted its sanctity. His latest

words were, "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and therefore I die an exile!"

Hildebrand's system of reform triumphed after his death: and there is scarcely in the history of the world a more striking illustration of the fact, that the first success of a triumphant opinion is owing to its containing some great and important truth, and that the subsequent decline of the opinion arises from its being falsified, by introducing into it a principle of exclusiveness. The theory of Hildebrand's system was beautiful: his plan was, to base supreme power on intelligence; and so far it was beneficent and wise; but he was anxious to concentrate both knowledge and power in the church, and this exclusiveness eventually changed the truth of the system into pernicious error. We can now clearly see the nature of the error: we know that there are many other modes by which mind may be developed besides the study of theology; but in the eleventh century, their existence was scarcely suspected, and never was there greater surprise than was felt by prelates and professors, when they first discovered that there was a rivalry between scholastic divinity and philosophy.

The church could not keep the monopoly of knowledge; and when that was lost, on Hildebrand's principles, it had no longer a right to the monopoly of power. When lawyers, physicians, statesmen, and diplomatists formed learned bodies and professions wholly unconnected with ecclesiastical pursuits, the clergy no longer could claim the exclusive direction of the mind. But in the days of Hildebrand, the world was a long way from these developments; it was necessary that

the church, the sole depository of intelligence, should triumph over the brute force of feudalism before intelligence could unfold itself in any direction. The papacy was, in its origin, a benefit to mankind; and perhaps there was never a system, that became a scourge to humanity, which could not similarly be traced to good motives, and even good principles.

While the church and feudalism were maintaining a fierce contest for supremacy, a third power, scarcely noticed by either of the parties, was gradually maturing its strength, and preparing to develope a new element of civilization—the liberty of the commons. We call it a new element, because the liberty sought was utterly unlike the fredom for which ancient democracies, such as the plebeians of Rome, contended. The commonalties of Europe did not ask for a share in the government to be yielded to their class, nor that they should be admitted to participate in aristocratic privileges; they only demanded guarantees for their security in person and property. They did not contemplate any social change, but merely the protection of man in his individuality.

We have seen, that when the feudal nobles had seized the remains of the power retained by the municipalities, the inhabitants of towns, as well as of the country, became subject to potent suzerains, under whom all property was legally held. No man, without consent of his feudal superior, could alienate or bequeath his possessions; and such consent was likewise necessary to his contracting a marriage, portioning a child, or appointing guardians for his offspring. He was strictly subject to the jurisdiction of his suzerain, and could

not institute a law-suit in any but the manorial court, without purchasing the consent of his lord, and making compensation for the fees thus withdrawn. Vassals were also subject to most oppressive services, and to exactions not regulated by law, and therefore constantly abused. The spirit of industry was checked in some cities by absurd regulations, and in others by taxes out of all reason and proportion; nor could the narrow and oppressive policy of a military body of nobles have ever permitted it to attain any degree of height or vigour, Europe, at this sad period, exhibited nothing but

> Nations of slaves with tyranny debased,
> Their Maker's image more than half effaced.

The oppressions, the marauding expeditions, and the profligate robberies of the nobility, led to the formation of associations for mutual defence, which were joined by many men of high rank, who had either been driven from their estates, or who dreaded such a fate from their more powerful neighbours. Against any confederacy the nobles were unable to make head; they were disunited among themselves, they were so ignorant that few of them could write their own names, and so short-sighted, that they mistook for individual outbreaks, the manifest signs of the progress of society. Still it is of importance to observe that the commons could scarcely have succeeded, had not their objects been practical and tangible: they did not seek to establish any theoretical principle of government, but to remove substantial grievances; and by adopting this wise course, they obtained benefits which they had not contemplated, for remedial measures are not only valuable for the evils they remove, but for the benefits they engender. This

truth was not even suspected by those who won charters of incorporation from the nobles, but its fruits have been reaped by their children.

The last power which entered into the struggle for the overthrow of feudalism was that of the crown. The commonalties were in most cases obliged to court the protection of the sovereign against the domineering spirit of the nobles, and thus an alliance was formed between the principle of royalty and the principle of liberty, which was equally advantageous to both. The municipalities being permitted to raise soldiers for their own defence, supplied the monarchs with armies devoted to his service, not like those composed of the retainers of the crown-vassals, more disposed to abridge than to extend his authority. They also greatly increased the force of the government by grants and loans of money, which gave the sovereign a decided superiority over the nobles, whose wealth generally consisted of raw produce. The elements of civilization opposed to feudalism, were the ideas of the supremacy of intelligence, and the force of law, morality and order, derived from the church; the necessity of guarantees for protection in person and property, developed by defensive associations and municipalities; and finally a growing belief in the expediency of establishing some central and controlling power, which at first vague and undetermined, finally centred in the notion of supreme government.

The influence of these civilizing causes was greatly increased, and almost rendered irresistible by the crusades. The restlessness of the feudal nobility, their love of adventure, glory and plunder, were gratified by an expedition into a land, which all the legends and

traditions of the time represented as a kind of terrestrial paradise. Fanaticism, considered as a feeling, having no connexion with ideas of temporal interest or aggrandizement, had very slight influence on the first crusaders; they knew little and cared less about the Mohammedan, but they went to Asia for the purpose of recovering the crown-lands of their lord, and afterwards holding them as his crown-vassals. Their butchery of the Jews was connected with this political idea; for they looked upon this unfortunate people as a race likely to claim the inheritance of the land they destined for themselves. Even those who knew that Palestine was no such desirable object as it had been represented in monkish tales, expected that the Millennium was at hand, and that a New Jerusalem would descend from heaven to reward the faithful soldiers of the cross. The invasion of Palestine, like that of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans, was more a result of the restlessness of feudalism than of a religious principle, however mistaken. Still it cannot be denied that bigotry was mingled with the motives of the adventurers; but in the tangled web of human affairs, it is not always possible to trace any event to a single and simple cause; on the contrary, we find motives of various kinds combining to produce almost every result, and in such diversity of proportions that it is not easy to determine which has predominated.

No king joined in the first crusade; it was undertaken chiefly by discontented or ambitious nobles. The regular crusade must not be confounded with the movements of the mobs that followed Walter the Penniless and Peter the Hermit; the latter were pure outbursts of ignorance and fanaticism, such as have often taken

place in Europe, from causes that appear inadequate to the result. Even when kings led the later hosts, we find them harassed by the feudal independence of their companions, and soon quitting the war, unless when they were animated by a similar spirit of restless adventure themselves.

But the consequences of the crusades are of more importance to us than their causes; and we shall briefly trace their influence in extending the power of the crown and the freedom of the commons. To raise money for the expedition, many nobles sold their feudal rights to their liege lords, who thus annexed considerable territories to their crowns at small expense. The fiefs of the great barons who died without issue in these wars reverted to their respective sovereigns, and some whose titles were not well established, found that the monarchs of the West were not scrupulous in applying the law of forfeiture, whenever they could devise a pretext. But this increase in the physical power of the crown was surpassed by the extension of its moral influence; during the absence of so many potent vassals accustomed to control their sovereign, an opportunity was afforded for extending the prerogatives of the crown unchallenged. This was particularly the case in the administration of justice; vassals began to institute suits in the royal instead of the baronial courts, because the latter, during the barons' absence, had either been discontinued or lost their efficacy. The nobles soon took the alarm at this innovation; but the European sovereigns steadily pursued their purpose, and the regular courts of law finally acquired the power which they now possess. It must not, however, be

supposed that heritable and territorial jurisdictions were abolished immediately; indeed traces of them may be discovered in most European countries at the present day; but while the most turbulent and warlike of the barons were absent, the authority of the royal courts was established, and their beneficial effects were so palpable that they could never again be shaken.

The vast sums which the barons had wasted in their distant expeditions led them to sell charters of community on cheap terms to the towns within their jurisdiction; and the example incited other towns to attempt to gain similar privileges by force, from the barons who were disinclined to sell them.

During the eleventh and part of the twelfth century, there was a long and desultory war between the cities of France and Germany, and the aristocracy; which were finally terminated by treaties of peace unfavourable to the latter, for such must the charters of incorporation granted to the cities and boroughs be considered. In England, a combination of fortunate circumstances rendered the contest between the barons and the municipalities less violent and protracted than it was on the continent, for in England the tendency of the people towards freedom has always been marked by a spirit of conciliation and forbearance towards existing institutions. The enfranchisement of the serfs was a consequence of the freedom acquired by the towns, and was encouraged by the sovereigns as a means of lowering the power of the nobility.

The court of Rome had taken the initiative in the crusades, and had deceived itself into the belief that it led the public opinion, which it really followed. It

had acquired immense strength by its conquest over feudalism, but its rulers did not see that this strength was based on opinion, on a belief in its superior wisdom and rectitude—qualities which were fast removing into other quarters. No sooner was the triumph over feudalism completed, than the church found itself fettered in its course towards establishing a theocracy by the extended power of royalty, and the increasing freedom of the people.

In this new struggle, the church is apparently opposed to the progress of civilization, but the opposition is in appearance only. The theocracy which the court of Rome sought to establish, was not in accordance with the general policy of the clergy, but on the contrary, was repugnant to the great majority. Instead of a despotism, the bishops of Christendom wished to establish a system of ecclesiastical government, in the nature of a federative republic, granting to the see of Rome only the rights of precedency. Could the clergy have secured exemption from civil jurisdiction and taxation, without the aid of the papacy, there is abundant evidence that they would gladly have aided the monarchs in achieving the independence of their national churches; and even in spite of the temptation of exemption, many of the prelates, and a much larger proportion of the inferior clergy, strenously resisted the papal attempts to usurp the rights of their sovereign.

Innocent IV. exhausted the strength of the Roman theocracy in his contest with the house of Hohenstauffen; but he was victorious, and his successors did not see that all the elements of their strength had been exhausted in the war. No one could believe any longer

in the superior wisdom or virtue of the papacy, for it had manifested incomprehensible folly and monstrous iniquity. But Boniface VIII. like many other politicians, could not perceive that the efficacy of ecclesiastical weapons, derived from opinion, is destroyed when that opinion changes; he hoped to raise a movement by spell-words, whose potency was resistless in the preceding half century, but which had now become no better than "sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal." He proclaimed open war against the independence of nations and kings, issued his manifestoes, fulminated bulls and excommunications, and, to his great astonishment, found that he had only wasted breath and paper. Edward I. of England, laughed him to scorn; Philip the Fair, of France, had him arrested as a criminal; the illusion of Roman omnipotence was at an end, the reality was gone long before.

This triumph of royalty over the papacy was not a victory over the church, for the church, as a body, was no party to the quarrel; and this is evident in the treaty between the belligerents, for the church was scandalously sacrificed by the election of Clement V. to the pontificate by the intrigues of Philip the Fair. The papacy had recognised its blunder; in all future struggles with monarchical power, the court of Rome acted strictly on the defensive; and in the fifteenth century we find it seeking an alliance with royalty, whose friendship could only be procured by sacrifices of power, and lending its aid to crush the growing freedom of opinion, and freedom of institution, between which, the popes were the first who discovered that there was an intimate and necessary connexion.

Supported by the ecclesiastical power, royalty soon completed its conquest over feudalism, and in many parts of Europe triumphed over the municipalities. Its success was greatly aided by the growth of diplomacy, which acquired strength when the permanence of governments and states gave an individuality to European nations. The necessity of unity of purpose and secresy of design in diplomatic transactions, was favourable to the increase of royal power: all the external relations of a people were found to be most efficiently regulated by its monarch; and an age in which these relations were necessarily complicated and uncertain, the age of their infancy and development, seemed destined to give absolute power to every king in Europe. Even in England, the Tudors were all but despotic, and in France the Bourbons acquired unrestrained authority.

But it was with royalty as with feudalism and the papacy, the moment that it became exclusive, it was shorn of its strength, and it was forced to admit the free action of the rival elements of civilization, or sink into ruin.

In Europe, religion, privilege, and right, have an existence separate and distinct from sovereignty; the church, the aristrocacy, and the people have their institutions as well as the monarchy, and the efforts of any one to acquire supremacy are at once checked by the presence of the rest. Our dangers from despotism, popery, feudalism, and republicanism, are nearly equal, for each of these is essentially nothing more than giving exclusive supremacy to some one principle in our constitution; the experiment has been tried with each in its turn, and the results were too injurious and too

notorious to admit of their being renewed while such a thing as history exists.

Royalty inherited the dominion of the papacy, but it has become in the progress of time a more moral idea than it was at the outset; no one now contends that its force rests in the individual will of the monarch; on the contrary, royalty is regarded as a convenient personification of the sovereignty of right, "of a will essentially reasonable, enlightened, just, impartial, superior to all individual wills, and having, therefore, a right to govern them."* In short, a monarch is the chief magistrate of the commonwealth, and is declared to be incapable of doing wrong, in the same sense and for the same cause that the law is called the perfection of human reason.

From the moment that the papacy had failed in its struggle against royalty, a desire for reformation began to appear in the church; it being obvious that doctrines which found no response in the general mind, must have been rendered thus inefficacious by some principle of corruption and decay. The papacy made a second blunder, and one more fatal than that committed in its struggle with royalty; it was a second time misled by the belief, that an inert and dead opinion was a living doctrine. The implicit veneration for the church in the sixth century, was owing mainly to its exclusive possession of intelligence; but in the sixteenth century, the ecclesiastical body most immediately connected with the papacy, had not only lost this monopoly, but had sunk into comparative mental imbecility. Of all the great discoveries in science and inventions in art, made

* Guizot, Lecture v.

during this long interval, there is scarcely one to which the aristrocracy of the church can establish a claim; and those made by the inferior clergy, whether regular or secular, were discouraged and even persecuted by the superior ecclesiastics. The human mind had made vast progress without the aid, and almost in despite of, the hierachy, and yet the papacy claimed the same iron rule over opinion as when learning and science were not to be found beyond the precincts of a cloister.

The consequences of this inconsistency produced feelings of restlessness within and without the church; a desire for papal reform became general; and it was considerably increased by the great schism of the West, which was itself a result of the new agitation of opinion. Unfortunately the ecclesiastical body believed that it would be sufficient to change some forms, while the wants of the times could only be satisfied by a renovation of doctrines. Hence the efforts for reform without the church, were directly opposed to those made within, and thus the popes attained a temporary triumph over both. The Council of Constance, bent on reform of one kind, burnt John Huss for attempting reform of another kind; and by this very act rendered themselves powerless, for they lost the support of popular opinion. The bishops had yet to learn the weakness of any aristocracy, spiritual or temporal, whose power is not supported by the people. Destitute of that support, the councils of Constance and Basle were dissolved without exciting any commotion, and the popes rejoiced in a victory a thousand times worse than a defeat. The papal institutions were left farther than ever behind the advance of opinion; and peaceful gradual reform

was refused, only to prepare the way for turbulent revolution.

The Reformation was not the work of Luther, Calvin, or Zuinglius; it would have taken place if they had never been born. The human mind had begun its great struggle for freedom of thought, and had generated opinions too strong and intense to remain long without a representative. True, the Reformers and their immediate successors denied to others the freedom which they claimed for themselves; but it is not less true, that in every Protestant country, the current of opinion flowed steadily onward to establishing not merely the toleration but the absolute right of private judgment.

Martin Luther was the leader, not the author, of the Reformation; and like many other leaders of revolutions, he did not always comprehend the nature and purpose of his mission, for he more than once stood aghast at the necessary consequences of his own actions. He was the representative of the democratic spirit of the times; and yet he became the champion of German feudalism, against not only emperors and popes, but also against the people. He had no distinct consciousness of the inconsistency between his principles and his position, and hence many of his proceedings have a character of presumption and unreasonable dictation, and his arguments in support of them are sophistical and inconclusive. There seems to be, among friends and enemies, a strong dislike to meddling with the character of this remarkable man, and his true biography remains yet to be written. Judging him from the portraiture of himself he has left us in his works, his

character seems to be one that "he who runs may read;" he was a coarse vulgar-minded man, with intellect strengthened but not polished by learning; he possessed great common sense, and a thorough contempt for every thing that is usually called "humbug," in which he included the rules of conventional morality; rules, however, which it must be confessed seem, in every age of mankind, to have been devised for cloking vice, rather than encouraging virtue. Many of his actions appear like a bravado to the public opinion of his age; for instance, his marriage with a nun, and his sanction of polygamy: but it is doubtful whether a man of inferior energies, less uncompromising boldness, and it must be added, less impudence, could have fought the battle which it was the glory of Luther to maintain. It is utterly absurd to canonize him as a saint, and still more so to condemn him as the worst of sinners. Luther was the great man of his age—the faithful representative of all its wisdom and of all its folly; to inquire whether, in every part of his arduous struggle, in every action of his harassed life, he preserved the methodical rules devised by society, is scarcely less absurd than to ask was a general dressed in the fashion when he led his army into battle, or a successful prime minister skilled in the etiquette of a ball-room. Luther's character is stamped on the history of his country, and even Catholic Germany acknowledges its obligations to the great reformer.

The unity of the progress of European civilization was in some degree broken, when the different states began to assume a permanent organization; it was altogether destroyed by the progress of the Reforma-

tion. There was not only a broad line of demarcation between the states that adopted a reformed and an unreformed church, but there was a great difference between the states in which the Reformation was promoted by the crown, or forced by the people. Here, therefore, this chapter should close, had not most of the recent writers on civilization misrepresented the special character of the Reformation in England, and some Protestant philosophers of France and Germany described our church as the enemy of all improvement. The subject is too interesting, and the charge too grave, to be dismissed in silence, and we shall therefore devote a brief space to its examination.

M. Guizot says of the reformed British hierarchy:— "It was, every whit, as full of abuses as the church of Rome, and infinitely more servile. . . . . The religious revolution was not accomplished in England as on the Continent; it was the work of the kings themselves. There is no doubt that the genius of reform might have formerly existed, and even efforts been made to forward it, and that probably these principles would not have been tardy in shewing themselves. But Henry VIII. took the leadership; *power became revolutionary*. The result, at least in the beginning, was that, as a redress of abuses and ecclesiastical tyranny, as an emancipation of the human mind, English reform was far less complete than Continental. It was suited, naturally enough, to the interest of its immediate authors. Royalty and episcopacy maintained in its full strength, divided between them, at once, the wealth and the power won as spoil from the vanquished papacy. The consequences soon made themselves perceptible. It was said that

the reform was completed, while the greater part of the motives that made it desirable still subsisted in their full strength. It reappeared in a popular form: it claimed from the bishops what it had claimed from the Romish church; it accused them of being so many popes. Every time that the general fortunes of the religious revolution were compromised, every time that it was necessary to struggle against the ancient church, all the portions of the reformed party rallied round the same standard, and made common cause against the common enemy: but when the danger was past, the internal struggle recommenced; popular reform renewed its attack upon royal and aristocratic reform, denounced its abuses, complained of its tyranny, demanded the fulfilment of its promises, and declared that it had reproduced the arbitrary power it had dethroned."

It must, in the first place, be observed, that "power becoming revolutionary," was by no means peculiar to the English Reformation. M. Guizot must know that feudalism in Germany, France, and Scotland, was not less a real power than royalty in England, and that in the struggle for the Reformation they were scarcely less revolutionary. In England, the king's desire of change was perhaps in advance of the people, and so were the reforming projects of the Huguenot leaders in France; but on the other hand, the people had in England at least a greater anxiety for the reform of abuses than the monarch, and in the first nineteen years of Henry's reign, all the power of royalty was engaged in the support of the papacy. The more, however, the history of the time is examined, the more we shall find that the influence of royalty on the English Reformation, at

least in its earliest stages, was not so much sought by the sovereign, as forced upon the crown by the people. This indeed is one of the most marked characteristics between Englishmen and other Europeans, that in every innovation, a constant respect is manifested for antiquity, and that all projects for reform are combined with reverence for established institutions. In every other country where an institution has outgrown the opinion on which it was founded, the efforts are uniformly directed to the subversion of the institution, and the establishment of something wholly new in its place. In England, on the contrary, the effort always has been to modify the old institution, so as to accommodate it to the change of opinion. Hence in every reform, the English people gain more in reality than they do in appearance, and hasty judges are deceived by the preservation of old forms, into a belief of the continuance of old abuses. No doubt the benefits of change are more slowly developed by the adoption of such a proceeding, but this defect is more than counterbalanced by great and obvious advantages; indeed this national characteristic possesses the most decisive of all advantages—success: a popular movement to a definite and attainable object, can scarcely fail of triumph, especially when it appears obvious to common sense, that in such a struggle the reformers are the Conservatives, and their opponents the Destructives. Every institution is founded on opinion, and the simple fact of its existence proves that a portion of the opinion still survives. The old opinion is conciliated by preserving the form of the institution,—the new and growing opinion is not wounded, for it is the child of the old, and therefore habituated to the

form, though it sees and enforces the necessity of a change in the substance.

Every great change in England has been effected under the auspices of a power recognised by the constitution: the Reformation was effected under the guidance of the sovereign—the limitations imposed on royalty in the age of the Stuarts were gained by the House of Commons—the Revolution was effected by the Church and the Aristocracy—and it is very doubtful whether the catholic question or the reform in parliament would have been carried if they had not been made cabinet measures. If the aid of royalty rendered the English reformation incomplete, it greatly facilitated its success, and opened a safe way to further and future improvement.

The course adopted by the English reformers necessarily led to the abandonment of two very injurious principles: the infallibility of the church, and the immutability of ecclesiastical forms and laws. No doubt the reformers were inconsistent in their conduct, and claimed for themselves the infallibility which they refused to the papacy. But this inconsistency was not peculiar to England; in every part of Europe the reformation was a revolution whose scope and purpose were not comprehended by its authors, and in consequence they all adopted institutions, and sanctioned practices inconsistent with their declared opinions. The burning of Servetus in Geneva, the persecution of Anabaptists in Germany; of Armenians in Holland; of Puritans in England; of Prelatists in Scotland; and of Papists in every Protestant country, threw a suspicion on the motives of the reformers, which frequently rendered their cause unpopular. They felt the inconsistency, and they

attempted to excuse it by shuffling evasions, by monstrous fictions, or by a disguised assumption of the infallibility which they had themselves condemned. Hence there is an appearance of meanness, trickery, and selfishness, in the early history of the Reformation, which it is utterly absurd to deny, because it is utterly impossible. The reason is not difficult to discover: religious opinion had developed itself with extraordinary rapidity, while political opinion was scarcely formed. Hence the reformed institutions could not be adapted to the reformed opinions, and in every country a secondary struggle became necessary to bring them into harmony.

The church and royalty in England did not share the entire wealth and power wrested from the papacy; a very large portion of both was transferred to the laity: every one knows that Henry VIII. distributed the property and estates of the monasteries among his courtiers, and the jurisdiction of the court of Chancery, which had long been connected with ecclesiastical discipline, was finally secured to the laity. The clergy also lost their independence of the civil power; and this was a gain to the government, rather than to the sovereign. M. Guizot is not justified in insinuating that the reformers of the English church, whether royal, episcopal, or aristocratic, ever declared that the constitution which they established and the formularies which they framed were fixed and immutable. On the contrary, there never was a period in the history of the English church when the possibility of a change was not conceded, though its expediency might be denied. In the controversy between the prelatists and the puritans, the

former invariably insisted on the reasonableness or innocence of the forms for which they contended, and did not rest their case on the mere authority of the church. It is true that they invited the aid of the secular arm when they failed to produce conviction, but their opponents, when in power, did the same; even M. Guizot himself, when minister of France, imposed vexatious restraints on the press, and preferred silencing his opponents by force to the trouble of refutation.

Leaving the conservation of pure doctrine entirely out of the question, and looking merely to the social and political tendencies of the English Reformation, we cannot see how the principles in which it originated could have been changed for the better. Let us separate the individual king and the individual bishops from royalty and episcopacy: it might have been advantageous no doubt to have a purer monarch than Henry VIII., and a prelate of firmer purpose than Archbishop Cranmer: but the question of personal character is indifferent to the issue; the true point is, whether such a change as the Reformation could have been more efficiently made, by known and established powers, such as royalty and episcopacy, or by new and unknown powers called into existence for that special purpose? Experience has answered for the Church of England; freedom of thought and mental independence have grown up under its charge; it always encouraged both in principle, even when it persecuted them in practice. There is a strength and a repose in great establishments favourable to private liberty; a more liberal and catholic theology pervades such a body, than can ever exist amidst the jealous eyes of small and contending

sects. There is a tendency in all societies to press their influence unduly on individual minds; and dissent often imposes heavier chains than those which it broke. It is not intended to assert that the Church of England is absolutely perfect; but enough has been said to shew, that it is associated with progress, that it has contributed and can contribute to the general improvement of society.

In resting the claims of the Church of England on the part it has taken in developing the last great element of European civilization—freedom of thought and mental independence—it must not be supposed that these are the only services which the Establishment has rendered to humanity. One of equal, perhaps of greater importance, was that the church early foresaw that "freedom of thought," like every other element of civilization, would become false and tyrannical so soon as it became exclusive: to the influence of the English church we owe the happiness of having the perilous experiment tried in a neighbouring country instead of in our own.

Freedom of thought became the predominant element in European civilization during the eighteenth century. At first it manifested itself in abstract speculation, which in England was promptly met by a counter-examination of facts and evidences: but on the Continent it was neglected by the antagonizing elements of temporal government and spiritual authority, which, deeming these speculations far remote from themselves, scarcely made any effort to check or restrain them. Thus allowed to become "a chartered libertine," the spirit of examination dashed over all barriers—cast

away every restraint—respected nothing, spared nothing. M. Guizot forcibly states the result:—

"I should be embarrassed to tell what were the external facts that the human mind respected, or to whose influence it submitted; it hated or despised the whole social state; it began to consider itself as a species of Creator; institutions, opinions, manners, society, and man himself, all were to be remodelled, and human reason undertook the enterprise."

This wildness of thought finally embodied itself in wildness of action. This is neither the time nor the place for entering into any consideration of the French Revolution: we need not portray opinion succeeding to opinion, and institution to institution, nor the bloodshed produced by these struggles and vicissitudes; one great truth was evolved by the struggle, which the world ought to have discovered long before—namely, that social happiness results from the co-ordination of the elements of civilization, and that it is injured, if not destroyed, by giving exclusive predominance to any one of them, even the most promising.

In this rapid examination of European civilization, we have found that feudalism, ecclesiastical power, royalty, and finally unrestricted reason, have gained absolute power by the force of the truth which they contained; that they grew tyrannical when they perverted that truth into falsehood, and were then torn down from "their pride of place" by insulted and outraged humanity. The moral lesson to be deduced from these views has been eloquently stated by M. Guizot, and after having had occasion to differ from him so often in this chapter, it is pleasant to find perfect harmony in the conclusion:—

"It is the duty, and it will be, I trust, the peculiar merit of our time to recognise that every power, whether intellectual or temporal, whether it belongs to governments or to the people, to philosophers or to ministers, whether exercised in one cause or in another,—that every human power, I say, carries within itself an inherent evil, a principle of weakness and abuse which must assign it a limit. It is only the general liberty of all rights, all interests, and all opinions, the free manifestation of all their forces, their legal co-existence; it is this system only that can restrain each force and each power within its legitimate limits, and hinder it from usurping the rights of others; in one word, free examination should really subsist, and for the profit of all."

CHAPTER XI.

THE INDEPENDENT CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE ADVANCE OF CIVILIZATION.

In the preceding chapter we examined the leading elements of European civilization as they were successsively developed, and shewn how they passed from speculative opinion into settled conviction, and how they then became embodied in institutions which influenced the internal condition of society, and the external relations of states. These revolutions were neither the result of force, nor of wisdom: no great masses were put in motion to subvert established order; no skilful statesman arranged the combinations of profound policy, to effect these mighty changes;—they were the result of a progressing advancement of intellect, sometimes accelerated, and sometimes retarded, by accidental causes. About the close of the fifteenth century, however, an unparalleled impulse was given to the progress of European civilization, by the simultaneous invention, or at least introduction from the East, of the mariner's compass, gunpowder and artillery, an improved system of arithmetic, and the art of printing. Combined with these, were a renewed study of the Roman law, the cultivation of Greek literature, the restoration of the fine arts, and the opening of new paths to industry and commercial enterprise. Useful as these inventions, discoveries, and revivals

were, their origin and history is involved in great obscurity: it would, indeed, be impossible, within our limits, to enumerate, much less to discuss, the controversies to which they have given rise; but we shall rather briefly examine some of the beneficial effects which they produced on the condition of European society.

Among the most prominent evils of feudalism, noticed in the preceding chapter, we particularly mentioned the want of a code of laws and a regular system of jurisdiction. The barbarous expedients of ordeal and wager of battle were so obviously repugnant to common sense, that the Church succeeded in bringing many civil suits under the canon law, and ecclesiastical jurisprudence became an object of such admiration and respect, that exemption from civil jurisdiction was courted as a privilege, and conferred as a reward. Towards the middle of the twelfth century, a copy of the Pandects of Justinian is said to have been accidentally discovered in Italy, and the superiority of the system of Roman jurisprudence to the vague and rude traditions of barbarism was so obvious, that in less than half a century law became a highly honoured profession, and universities for its study were founded in Bologna, Naples, Padua, and other places.

The social effect of the study of law was very great. Hitherto, arms were considered the only profession worthy of a gentleman; and the education of the higher ranks was confined to war and its usages; even their exercises and pastimes had a military character. But when law began to be studied, a knowledge of it was rendered necessary to the discharge of magisterial

and judicial functions; a new profession — different from arms, but not less honourable—was introduced among the laity, and was zealously pursued, as a new road to wealth and eminence.

Civil law being separated from ecclesiastical, the lawyers succeeded to a large portion of the power which had formerly been possessed by the clergy; and thus a jealousy arose between the two professions, which soon ripened into open hostility. The lawyers were naturally opposed to the ecclesiastics and the nobles—for it was with them an object of great importance to remove the trial of causes from the spiritual and baronial courts, into the royal courts, where they themselves practised. Their interest in extending the royal jurisdiction, made them, at the first, zealous supporters of the royal prerogative; but when their courts were firmly established, they became strenuous supporters of the majesty of law. Hence the lawyers, who, in the reign of Elizabeth and the earlier years of the reign of James I., carried the notions of prerogative to their utmost extent, were, in the reign of Charles I., equally zealous in enforcing the constitutional rights of the people. The expansion of law and the legal profession, not only put an end to the dominion of feudal force, but imposed restrictions on the usurped power of the papacy, and on the despotic tendencies which were manifested when royalty acquired the ascendency in Europe.

From the time that the Eastern empire was deprived of the Exarchate of Ravenna, the knowledge of the Greek language and literature rapidly declined in Europe, and sunk almost into complete oblivion. The

disputes between the Greek and Latin churches prevented the ecclesiastical powers of Europe from sanctioning any effort for the revival of these studies. Even when a Latin empire was established in Constantinople, the crusaders, by whom it was founded, paid no attention to the literary treasures contained in the city. Heeren, indeed, asserts that the great destruction of the works preserved in the Byzantine libraries was owing to the conquest of the Latins, and that they left little for the Ottomans to devastate.

When Constantinople was taken by the Turks, a great number of illustrious and learned Greeks sought shelter in Italy. They reached the Peninsula at a time when the writings of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccacio, had created a general taste for literature, and they were gladly received as teachers of poetry, philosophy, and eloquence. Great resistance was made to the new study by the partisans of scholastic philosophy. In the university of Oxford, a number of professors and students, calling themselves Trojans, opposed the study of Greek with a virulence that sometimes led to personal violence. But in spite of such efforts, a taste for Greek literature was generally diffused among the learned, and was even favoured by the ecclesiastical authorities.

The reading of the New Testament in the original Greek weakened the estimation in which the authorized version of the Latin church had been hitherto held. The Vulgate Translation, made when Latin was the vernacular language, had, like the prayers and formularies of the church, become unintelligible to the people. It may indeed be noticed, as one of those

inconsistencies into which men fall by a literal interpretation of precedent, that the presenting the Scriptures and forms of prayer to the laity in an unknown tongue, which was so prominent an objection against the Romish church in the age of the Reformation, was virtually the result of the efforts made by the earlier Latin church to render both intelligible to the people.

The Vulgate version, though literal and accurate, is deficient in spirit; it is thoroughly imbued with western mind, and wants the oriental colouring which is so marked a characteristic of the original. This is more particularly the case in the Old Testament; the translator was not acquainted with the usages of oriental life; he has, therefore, accommodated the patriarchal and Jewish history to the climate and customs of southern Europe; and this error is the more to be lamented, as it is manifested, not so much by any particular phrase or passage, but by the general impression resulting from the whole. In the New Testament the same error is, however, apparent; and one instance of it—the confusion between demons and devils—has left its traces in most of the western translations. The study of the New Testament in the original, if it did not produce any radical change in the doctrines of Christianity, presented them under new aspects, and with a greater degree of force and power than they are offered in the Vulgate.

As a proof of the little intercourse between the Greeks and Latins previous to the capture of Constantinople, we may notice the neglect of the composition called the Greek Fire, in the western wars. At the end of the eleventh century, the Pisanese fleet was

severely injured by this artificial flame; but the Italians were unable to discover the secret of its composition, though it was early revealed to the Mohammedans of Syria and Egypt. The application of gunpowder to the purposes of war, however, rendered the secret of the Greeks worthless, by introducing a cheaper and more efficacious engine of destruction. The difficulties respecting the origin of gunpowder may perhaps be solved by considering the preparation of the material, and its application to purposes of war, as distinct and separate inventions. The explosive force of nitre seems to have been known in China and India from the most remote ages; but the chief use made of it, was in the manufacture of fireworks for public festivals and rejoicings. The Arabs and Saracens learned the art of preparing it, when they extended their conquests beyond the Oxus; and it was probably from them that Roger Bacon, who was deeply versed in Saracenic literature, derived the secret of its composition. It was not until a century after his time that we find gunpowder employed for artillery. The earliest authenticated account we have of these engines of war, describes them as being employed by the king of Granada at the siege of Baza, A.D. 1342. Another century elapsed before they were brought to anything like perfection. Guns and pistols were scarcely known before the sixteenth century: old habits made warriors prefer the ancient implements of war, and for a long time the use of fire-arms was deemed equally sinful and disgraceful.

The revolution produced in war by the introduction of artillery and musketry, deprived battle of its worst

horror—the indulgence of individual passion and personal feeling. From the time of the change, the trade of a soldier was no longer calculated to foster a sanguinary disposition, and to form habits of ferocious cruelty, and as we have already said, war thus lost its demoralizing effect on survivors. The new processes of war also accelerated the fall of feudalism, for it destroyed the importance of the armed knights, who had long been regarded as the chief strength of every European army. The knight, in his panoply of mail, a kind of moving fortification, was little endangered by arrows, darts, and spears, but his armour was of little avail against the destructive force of shot and shell. The military importance of the cavaliers, the original source of their political power, was swept away, and they were thus forced to lay aside their independent attitude, and enter into the combinations of political society. The employment of artillery rendered wars more expensive, and thus brought them into immediate connexion with the operations of finance. Hence sovereigns were compelled to adopt measures for the increase of national wealth, and the importance of the commercial classes was proportionally raised as their aid in supplying armaments became more necessary. It may indeed be said, that the application of gunpowder to war greatly increased the influence of the central power, and thus extended the authority of the sovereign; but by an operation, slower though not less certain, it again transferred a large share of this influence to the mercantile and moneyed classes.

Recent investigations have enabled us to trace the introduction of the magnetic needle into Europe with some degree of accuracy. The circumstance which has

perplexed most of those who have written on the history of navigation, is that the earliest European accounts of the directive power of the magnet, refer to it as something generally known, and not as a recent discovery. Hence we may reasonably infer, that it was practically known to sailors before it engaged the attention of the learned, and that they obtained it by intercourse with some nation where the compass: was in ordinary use. This conjecture has been changed into a certainty by Klaproth's researches: he has shewn that the polarity of the needle was known to the Chinese before the Christian era, and that they employed it in their land journeys when they had to pass through the Tartarian deserts. In the history of the Tsin dynasty, we find the following account of the mode in which the magnet was used: "a light wooden figure was made with the hand extended, and a magnetic bar was passed through the arm, so that when the figure turned freely on a pivot its finger always pointed to the south. When the emperor went in state, a car furnished with one of these figures headed the procession and served to indicate the cardinal points." It is not improbable that the Arabs taught the use of the compass, which they had themselves derived from the Chinese, to the European sailors who frequented their ports, for the mode in which it was at first used by the nations of the west is exactly that described in the old Chinese historians and repeated by the Arabian historians. Bailak, who published his "Merchant's Treasure" in the 681st year of the Hegira (A.D. 1282), gives the following account of the way in which a compass was formed by the mariners of his day, and it is essentially the same as

the descriptions given by the writers of the Middle Ages and the Chinese narratives collected by Klaproth. "The captains who navigate the Syrian sea, when the night is so dark that they cannot see a star, by which they might determine the cardinal points, fill a vessel with water and shelter it from the wind. Then they take a needle, which they stick into a splinter of wood or a reed, in the form of a cross, and throw it on the surface of the water. Afterwards they take a piece of lodestone, large enough to fill the hand, which they bring near the surface of the water, and they give the water motion by stirring it, so that the needle begins to revolve. Then they suddenly withdraw their hands, and the needle certainly points north and south. I saw them do this with my own eyes while voyaging from Tripoli in Syria to Alexandria, in the 640th year of the Hegira (A.D. 1242)."*

From this account it appears probable that the adoption of the compass as a guide, was slow and gradual. Bailak, we see, declares that it was only used when celestial observations could not be made; and hence the use of the magnetic needle, like most other improvements, might have been long very partial and limited, had not other circumstances given an impulse to navigation.

The increased intercourse between the eastern and western world produced by the crusades did not cease when these laws were relinquished. A commercial spirit was excited in the Italian republics, which triumphed over bigotry, and led them to seek a peaceful

* The experiment mentioned by Bailak has been tried with complete success on several occasions.

intercourse with the Mohammedan nations. The benefits which trade conferred on southern Europe induced the cities of the north to form the celebrated Hanseatic league, and subsequently stimulated the people of the Netherlands to become a nation of merchants. While Europe was thus improving, great interest was excited by intelligence of the mighty conquests effected by the Mongols (A. D. 1246), and Pope Innocent IV. hoped to convert their Khan, and engage him in a plan for the total subversion of Mohammedanism. He sent some monks into Asia for the purpose, and his example was followed by St. Louis of France, who laboured under the delusion that some great Christian monarchy existed in the unknown regions of northern Asia. These ambassadors were followed by travellers, who ventured into such remote countries induced by the prospect of commercial advantages or by motives of mere curiosity. First, both in time and merit among these, was Marco Polo, who visited the most eminent commercial cities of Asia, and penetrated even to Cambolu or Pekin, the capital of China, or as it was then called, Cathay. On his return to Europe he astonished his cotemporaries by his accounts of the wealth, beauty, and fertility of the regions he had visited, the variety of their manufacture, and the extent of their trade. A desire of obtaining access to these wealthy regions was generally diffused, and it was anxiety to reach Cathay that led to the discovery of America.

The discovery of the Canaries or Fortunate Islands by the Spaniards, about the middle of the fourteenth century, infused a bolder spirit into navigation; and when John, king of Portugal, sent an armament against

the Moors of Barbary, he ordered that some of the vessels should be employed in exploring the unknown regions on the coast of the Atlantic (A.D. 1412). The progress of discovery on the African coast, under the auspices of Prince Henry of Portugal, was very steady though slow; it received fresh impetus from John II. king of Portugal, who hoped that it would be practicable to find a new route to the West Indies, and had his wishes gratified by the discovery of a passage round the Cape of Good Hope (A.D. 1483).

Before the new route to India could be thoroughly explored, the attention of Europe was diverted to a more wondrous and unexpected event—the discovery of a New World, situated in the Western Ocean, by Christopher Columbus, a Genoese in the service of Spain. Familiar as we now are with the figure and magnitude of the earth, it is not easy to comprehend how difficult these ideas appeared in the Middle Ages, and how slowly men perceived the inferences which they immediately suggested;* and we do not, consequently, give all the praise which Columbus deserved, when he asserted that land would be discovered by sailing in a westerly direction. The early travellers in Asia had exaggerated the extent of India and China, so that if any credit was given to their narratives, these countries must have reached to the place where America really stands. From these false premises, Columbus drew a just conclusion, and endeavoured

* Many persons will remember how difficult these notions appeared when first suggested to their youthful minds; but, in point of fact, the sphericity of the earth is practically unknown to a large number, not only of the uneducated, but of the educated, throughout Europe.

to persuade his cotemporaries that Cathay might be reached by steering right across the Atlantic. They could not comprehend how the supposed fact of Cathay's great extension eastwards was a proof that it would be reached by sailing westwards; and hence the courts to which Columbus first applied, heard his proposals coldly, or rejected them altogether.

Encouraged and supported by Queen Isabella of Spain, Columbus crossed the Atlantic, and on the 11th of October 1492, saw the first American land—the island of St. Salvador. In subsequent voyages, the sphere of discovery was enlarged, and it was in some degree completed when Balboa, in 1513, discovered the Pacific Ocean. It is not necessary to dwell upon the butcheries perpetrated by the Spaniards in Mexico and Peru, or the vicissitudes to which India has been exposed since Vasco de Gama opened, through the ocean, a highway to its shores. It is of more importance to examine the total change in the direction and order of commerce throughout the world, produced by the discoveries of Gama and Columbus. Trade, forsaking what had hitherto been its natural and necessary course, passed from the land to the ocean, and thus revolutionized all the commercial advantages resulting from geographical position. The coasts of the Atlantic became the site of the universal commerce which had previously belonged to the shores of the Mediterranean. The Spaniards and Portuguese were the first to profit by the change, and they made the natural but pernicious error of applying to new circumstances the narrow policy derived from a far different condition of the world.

Spain did not immediately derive any great advantages from the discovery of the New World. The plunder obtained by the first adventurers, tended little to enrich the parent state; and it was not until the discovery of the mines of Potosi and Sacotecas, that Spain derived a permanent addition of wealth and revenue from her American conquests. Still later was the discovery that these countries could be rendered profitable only by industry and cultivation, and that, to be improved, they must be colonized. The true system of colonization, based on a system of mutual advantage to the settlements and the parent state, was never discovered by the Spaniards. They kept their colonies as an Eastern despot does the beauties of his harem—profitless to themselves, and secluded from others.

The Portuguese, on the contrary, opened a lucrative trade, in manufactured articles and in cultivated produce, with a land where commerce and industry had already received great development. Indeed, the chief value of America to Europe, after its first discovery, was the supply it yielded of the precious metals, which met the drain of gold and silver produced by the earlier stages of the Eastern trade. For a long time India consumed little, if any, of the manufactures of Europe. Its silks, its spices, and its muslins, were exchanged for money only; and the trade could never have extended itself, had not the Spanish colonies supplied the precious metals to meet the demand.

This course of trade greatly tended to the development of manufacturing industry. In order to obtain Mexican and Peruvian dollars, England or Holland ex-

ported to Spain, or its dependencies, a certain quantity of manufactured goods, and thus obtained the means of purchasing Indian produce. The direct export of manufactured goods to Hindostan, is a change that has been wrought almost within our own memory.

As America became cultivated, the Americans furnished a fresh incentive to the manufacturing industry of Europe, by their vast demands for the supply of an increasing population, in countries where cultivation of the soil is still, and must long continue, more profitable than the mechanical arts. The Europeans are the manufacturers for the Americans, and, as a consequence, they are dependent on America for a supply of the raw material.

Manufacturing industry has thus been the result of commercial activity, and in its turn it has re-acted on commerce, and compelled manufacturers to seek for new markets in every quarter of the globe. It has, indeed, become an object of sound policy to plant new nations of purchasers,—to send out colonies to distant lands, where articles of produce may be raised valuable in the markets of the parent state, and therefore fit to be exchanged for the results of its manufacturing industry.

The colonies of Modern Europe have been divided, by Heeren, into four classes.* Of these he ranks *Agricultural Colonies*, first. In these, the object is the cultivation of the soil and other natural advantages of the country. The colonists become landed proprietors from the outset, and in process of time may be expected to form a nation. The second class comprises *Plan-*

* See Heeren's European State System, vol. i. p. 36.

tation Colonies, whose object is the supply of certain natural productions, such as sugars, spices, etc. which are highly valued in Europe. In these, though the colonists are proprietors, they are less attached to the soil than in the preceding class. In many instances, they are non-residents, acting by stewards and agents. In none, do they aspire to forming a nation. Slavery is almost peculiar to this form of colony, and cannot long subsist when it changes to the agricultural. *Mining Colonies* form the third class, the nature and objects of which are sufficiently explained by the name. The fourth class consists of *Trading Colonies,* whose object is, a traffic in the natural productions of the country, whether of land or sea; as, for instance, the cinnamon and pearls of Ceylon; and also in manufactured articles. These consist, at first, of nothing more than factories or staples for the convenience of trade; but force or fraud soon enlarge them, and the colonists become conquerors, without, however, losing sight of the original object of their settlement. Though masters of the country, they are too little attached to it to become naturalized. We may, unfortunately, add to these a fifth class — *Penal Colonies,* receptacles for the drainage of moral pollution from the parent state. These may, however, be referred to the agricultural class, for they are destined to become nations.

Without examining the merits of these several modes of colonization, it is obvious that their existence must have led to examinations and discussions by which truths, valuable to humanity, were elicited. In almost every European country, colonization has engaged a large share of public attention from the varied interests

which it involves; and it has not only become a powerful agent in altering the relations of society, but it has developed other elements of increasing strength, the consequences of which will not, probably, be appreciated for many generations.

The enlarged stock of public ideas derived from the sources at which we have glanced, were rendered operative by their diffusion through society in consequence of the introduction of the art of making paper and of printing. Before the invention of paper made from linen-rags, parchment was commonly used for copying books, and for all public records; but, as this was scarce and dear, cotton-paper was frequently purchased from the Arabs in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The use of cotton-paper was derived from the remote East. It was first made known to the Saracens, when they conquered Samarcand (A.D. 704), and soon after, a paper manufactory was established at Mecca. China was the country whence the people of Samarcand derived their knowledge of paper, and in that country the art of manufacturing it was discovered more than two centuries before the Christian era. The use of linen was not general in Europe until the commencement of the thirteenth century. The similarity between linen and cotton stuffs must naturally have suggested the possibility of making paper from one as well as the other; and Germany, where most flax was grown and most linen made, was, probably, the parent of the invention. The oldest paper manufactory of which we have any account, was that established at Nuremberg.

The origin of the invention of the art of printing is much more difficult to be determined than that of

manufacturing paper, probably because it was a discovery made very gradually. From a very remote age the Chinese practised the art of printing from solid blocks, like our modern stereotype plates; and this art was introduced into Europe for the purpose of manufacturing playing-cards. The designs of the cards were engraved on wood, and impressions taken from the blocks nearly a century before the art of printing from moveable types was known. The card-makers soon began to cut pictures of the saints, and sketches of sacred history on the wooden blocks, which were readily purchased for the purpose of illuminating missals and other books of devotion. These wood-engravings probably suggested to Gutenberg the invention of moveable wooden types, which he certainly began to use at Strasburg so early as A. D. 1436. This was followed by the invention of type-founding, which can be clearly traced to Peter Scheffer, A.D. 1456, and of the press at an unknown era. Gutenberg entered into partnership with John Fust or Faustus, a citizen of Mayence, who greatly improved the art, and in that age of superstition was deemed a conjuror on account of his mechanical dexterity.

Such was the use of an art, which has given combination and energy to the public opinion of nations, and bestowed on the entire community a power of sharing in the deliberations of the state. The invention developed no new element of civilization, but it gave intensity and extent to all. In nothing has the influence of printing, and more particularly that of journals, been more remarkably displayed than in the extension and enforcement of individual rights. No

doubt the blessings of the press have been abused, and that the power of personal protection has been made subservient to purposes of personal calumny; but this only shews that the liberty of the press, like every other species of freedom and every element of civilization, must be restricted in order to be possessed. The degree of restraint is difficult in any case to be determined precisely, but there is a rule of adjustment suggested by the experience of all ages, though very frequently neglected; namely, that the proportion of restraint should be limited to the quantity exactly necessary for the preservation of the community. And for this limitation of restriction to a minimum, the reason is at once apparent, for in the words of Mr. Burke—"Liberty is a good to be approved, not an evil to be lessened."

The liberty of the press is not merely a restraint upon the usurpations of the government, it is in a still greater degree a check upon the passions of the people. Political discussion renders men acute, inquisitive, dexterous, prompt in attack, ready in defence, full of resources. In despotic countries the people judge of an ill principle in government only by its working itself into an actual grievance, they thus lure despotism into working out its own ruin, and allow evils to accumulate until there are no means of remedy but the subversion of the institution. Where there is a free press they anticipate the evil, and judge of the pressure of the future grievance by the badness of the principle. "They augur misgovernment at a distance, and snuff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze."*

* Burke's Speech on Conciliation with America, p. 86.

The value of free discussion as a kind of safety-valve by which dangerous accumulations of popular passion or prejudice may escape without detriment to the machinery of society, is proved by the evils which have arisen from the efforts to repress it; and, on the other hand, by the tranquillity with which great constitutional changes are effected, when their advocates and their opponents have equal facilities for the publication of their opinions. But upon this subject it is not necessary to dilate, as the beneficial effects of free discussion are matter of daily experience.

The general circulation of the Bible, consequent on the facilities derived from the invention of printing, is an element of civilization, the importance of which cannot be too highly estimated. If the power of making an immediate appeal "to the law and to the testimony" has not removed all the errors which crept into the Christian churches during the dark ages, it has greatly abated their intensity and their influence. The offensive doctrines are no longer maintained in their ancient force, those who nominally hold them are forced to explain them away; error thus capitulates with truth, and perhaps we may say with some justice that it is only obstinate where the friends of truth push the rights of victory to the utmost, and refuse the vanquished the empty honours of war. But more important is it to observe that the general diffusion of the Scriptures prevents the introduction of new errors, or at least the development of injurious novelties in the Christian system. It would be a curious and not unprofitable task, to compare the religious aberrations of the last century with those of any that have preceded

it, for the result would shew the conservative influence of the circulation of the Bible in a form that might defy contradiction. It would prove that a guide is accompanying the onward march of generations; that the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire have directed the progress of humanity, and saved Christian nations from being lost in that desert where the pomp of Babylon, the glory of Greece, and the pride of Rome, have for ever perished.

It would scarcely be consistent with the plan of this work to omit noticing the wondrous development of a new agent or element of civilization, the astonishing results of which are daily rising in fresh and unexpected forms before our eyes—the use of steam as a motive power, the progress of machinery and manufactures, and the rapid accumulation of large masses of people in manufacturing districts, are formative powers, almost created before our eyes. There can be no doubt that these circumstances are producing an immense and increasing influence on the destinies of Europe, and that they will modify if not direct the civilization of the coming age. But experience will give us little help in determining the nature of the influence they may exercise, for the steam-engine, the cotton-mill, and the rail-road, have had no precedents; history furnishes no rule for their management. So rapidly did they pass through their stage of infancy, that they had taken their position in society and firmly established themselves before there was time to prepare a place for their reception.

Such potent novelties, developing themselves with equal force and rapidity, necessarily dislocated and disturbed all existing institutions; and a considerable

amount of suffering must have been produced, and perhaps may still be expected, before the nice process of adjustment between the old and the new elements of society can be fairly arranged. There are some who see nought but evil, and there are others who can discover nothing but perfection, in the Factory system; and while the rival advocates are disputing about such opposite views, the system itself is permitted to hold its onward course, unregulated, or at best left to the guidance of chance and caprice. Without entering on any controverted points, we may perhaps be permitted to direct attention to some of the acknowledged facts respecting the moral consequences of the factory system, and to point out their bearings on the destinies of the rising generation.

It is an admitted evil, that population has accumulated in certain districts beyond the means of finding proper accommodations. Sewerage, drainage, ventilation, and the supply of water, have been neglected in the haste to provide dwellings for the multitudes that aggregate round a factory. The operatives have been forced to locate themselves in crowded cellars and lodging-rooms, where the means of preserving those great safeguards of virtue, decency and modesty, are wholly wanting. From these evils many lamentable consequences, which will scarcely bear to be described, have notoriously followed; they have produced physical disease and moral corruption to an extent that could scarcely be exaggerated. But these evils are not beyond the power of amendment; and in fact the several municipalities have adopted measures of amelioration, which, though as yet inadequate to the exigencies of the

case, are a considerable advance on the road to improvement.

The process of adjustment between the old means of accommodation and the accumulated masses for whom provision must be made, is very far from being of simple and easy attainment. But nevertheless it must be diligently sought, for we cannot get rid of the factory system if we would. The wildest declaimers against its evils have never proposed that mills should be closed by act of parliament, or the use of spinning-jennies and power-looms be forbidden in England. It is therefore of the utmost importance to keep steadily in view, that all the remedies devised should combine the perpetuation, and even extension of manufactures with the means for preventing the evils to which they have given rise. These are conditions which cannot easily be fulfilled, but it is needless to dwell on their obvious necessity.

The employment of infant-labour is very generally urged as the worst feature in the factory system; but it is generally recognised that this is a result of a greater evil, and in many cases an alleviation of it, arising from the disturbance of the parental and filial relations in manufacturing districts. The operatives are absent from home all day; and in many cases, from the crowded state of the lodging-houses, have no opportunity for conversation or social union with their families at night. Hence there is a want of those domestic feelings reciprocally fostered by domestic intercourse—a want which to the operatives themselves is "a craving void," scarcely suspected by those who are not intimate with their condition. Mothers remain at the mill during the pe-

riod of their pregnancy to the very last hour of physical endurance, and they return to work at the earliest possible moment after their recovery. Hence there is a sad waste of infant life during the periods of lactation and teething; and when this critical time is past, there is an absence of parental care and superintendence, which exposes children to forming habits of vagrancy and idleness.

Now it is one of the clearest results established by experience, that the parental and filial relations are the most powerful of the consevative bonds that hold together the moral condition of society. Can we, without horror, reflect on the state of a human being abandoned to all the chances of contamination that surround mankind, without shield or protection from earliest infancy?

> Where shall his hope find rest?—No mother's care
> Protects his infant innocence with prayer;
> No father's guardian hand his youth maintains,
> Calls forth his virtues, or from vice restrains.

The loss of the moral influence which the sight of infant innocence exerts on the parental mind, is not to be less lamented. A child is a moral instructor, and the silent lessons it inculcates are felt by the most vitiated and depraved. The value of the sermons preached by the cradle has never been fully estimated; but those who have visited our prisons, and who have had to deal with the most hardened criminals, know that there is a well-spring of affection in a father's heart, which even the fires of the worst guilt have not dried up, and the name of a child, like the wand of the prophet, has drawn living waters from the flinty rock.

The loosening of the bonds between parents and children in the manufacturing districts, is a moral injury to both, for which not they, but the condition of society, should be held responsible. There is no doubt that the evil could be greatly mitigated. The opening of halls and gardens, where innocent relaxation and the opportunities of social converse might be cheaply or even gratuitously obtained, is an obvious remedy for the worst part of the results, and would, besides, check the temptation to intemperance—a vice to which the labouring classes are too often forced by the utter impossibility of obtaining the recreation, which is an imperious want of humanity, from any other source.

Confined all day to the factories, and, for the most part, wanting a place in which families could meet conveniently, it is evident that the operatives can devote little time or care to the education of their children; and, but for the interference of public and private benevolence, the young would grow up without any systematic instruction whatever. When we consider that education is the preparation of the mind for the scene in which it is to act, the condition of children abandoned by their parents and neglected by the state, appears truly horrible. Much injury has been done by representing the matter as a question between education and no-education: but in this world there is no such thing as non-education. Every human being is educated; that is, his principles are derived, and his manners framed, from the society with which he is surrounded. When a lady told Archbishop Sharpe that she would not give her children religious instruction until they reached mature age, the prelate replied

with equal wit and wisdom, "Madam, if you do not teach them the devil will." In the absence of proper educators, depravity supplies a host of active teachers, whose capabilities are proved by the hosts of promising pupils that surround us. The pickpocket, the thief, the poacher, are all highly educated; and the new class of juvenile delinquents, the robbers of shop-tills and counters, are educated not only intellectually but physically, for they glide along the ground noiselessly as snakes, and exhibiting the same lubricity and elasticity, while, if caught, they can mimic the cries of starvation and disease so admirably, that they are often rescued from the hands of justice by the false compassion of the multitude.

Without entering at all into the question of National Education, it may be stated, without offence to any party, that some system of juvenile instruction and restraint is absolutely necessary in the manufacturing districts, as a simple measure of police, to supply the absence of parental control; and if facts are required to illustrate a truth sufficiently obvious from the nature of the case, they may be found in the Constabulary Reports, where we find that the palm of skill, ingenuity, and hardihood, is conceded to the juvenile delinquents of Manchester by the unanimous consent of the thieves of Great Britain.

The anxiety of parents in these districts to obtain employment for their children at an early age, must not always be attributed to avarice; a much more common motive is the anxiety "to keep them out of harm's way." Hence any absolute prohibition of juvenile labour may be seriously injurious to the children them-

selves. It is easy to turn them out of the factory, but then comes the question—What is to be done with them? Are they to be turned as vagrants into the streets, in order to keep up a regular supply of delinquents? Or, are they to be sent, as is not unusual, to work in the mine until they are old enough to work in the factory? These are questions of no easy solution; and they are, therefore, usually omitted in all discussions of the subject. It is truly desirable that government should take the guardianship of these helpless beings, virtually deprived of parental care; their state-protectors might beneficially interfere to regulate the nature and duration of their labours, but to deprive them of work altogether, aggravates their poverty, exposes them to temptation, and leads them to crime. We have selected a few of the most prominent evils developed in the new state of society; for *new* our manufacturing population indisputably is,—and we have seen that these evils are not so much attributable to the influence of machinery, or the factory system which is based on machinery, as to the inconsistency between that system and the ancient established institutions. A system of adaptation and adjustment might therefore be expected to remedy much of the evil, which want of harmony between the facts and the rules of society has produced. It would be easy to multiply examples of this inconsistency, and trace its results in corresponding evils; but such a discussion would be of inconvenient length, and would, besides, involve controversial topics which might awake angry passions in some, and painful feelings in others.

But, notwithstanding the drawbacks just mentioned,

it requires very little attention to discover that the factory system tends to the advancement of civilization, and will be more and more effective in the improvement of society as it gradually bends and forces institutions into harmony with its exigences. We do not speak of the vast amount of physical comforts that may be commanded by a small quantity of capital, nor of the facilities afforded to industrial activity in accumulating and realizing capital—though these are of vast importance, inasmuch as the moral state of every community must, to a great extent, depend on its physical condition; but in the factory system, viewed solely in reference to employers and operatives, there are elements of moral greatness and moral goodness, whose influence has increased and is increasing.

One of the most striking of these elements is Confidence: it is impossible to travel through a manufacturing district without being astounded at beholding the millions of property that remain at the mercy of the ashes of a tobacco-pipe. Were there any danger of such an insurrection as the Jacquerie, or Jack Cade rebellion among the operatives, all the military force of England could not defend the property accumulated in the single county of Lancaster. If Swing and Rock took cotton instead of corn for the subject of their experiments, the mischief, which could by no possibility be prevented, would be incalculable. But capitalists invest their money in mills and machinery without any dread of the incendiary, and operatives behold the structures rise without ever anticipating that they will become their prisons. When a foreigner, some time since, asked a party of operatives, if they did not regard

the mills of Manchester as a kind of Bastilles, they not only laughed him to scorn, but were thoroughly persuaded of his insanity.

This feeling of general confidence and security extends into individual relations. There may be avaricious and tyrannical mill-owners, but it is so obviously their interest to disguise avarice and tyranny, that they must assume the appearance at least of the contrary virtues. The peculiarity of the connexion between the employer and the operatives forces their relation to be equitable, and the fact of equity being established, the feeling naturally follows. This relation is, indeed, no way similar to that between a vassal and a feudal lord, for the operative is as destitute of the dependence of the one, as the employer is of the power of the other;—it is a moral tie, derived from a sense of reciprocal benefits, and cemented by a sense of mutual justice.

An anecdote recorded by Mr. Villerme, in his recent work on the Physical and Moral Condition of the French Operatives, is too remarkable an illustration of this important truth to be omitted. "After the first insurrection of the workmen of Lyons in 1831, the founder of the beautiful factory La Sauvagère, in the vicinity of that city, was quite astonished on going out of his house on the morning of the second day of the riots to find a man posted as sentinel on his gate whom he recognised as a workman that he had dismissed for improper conduct. "What are you doing there?" he inquired. "I am mounting guard over you." "Mounting guard over me! Why?" "Because all your workmen have entered into an association for your defence: there are twelve of them posted in the factory, and we will relieve

each other so long as this row lasts." "But you are not one of my workmen: I turned you off." "True, sir; but I deserved it: I was in the wrong." *

There is no need to go to France for such examples: it was the author's good fortune not long ago to visit the extensive manufactory at Hyde, in Cheshire, and to be accompanied by the proprietor, Mr. Thomas Ashton, in the inspection of the works and of the village where the operatives reside. It would be impossible to describe the respectful gratitude evinced by the workmen to their employer wherever he appeared; it was a delightful union of perfect devotedness and perfect independence. There was silence in his presence, and prayers for his prosperity when he withdrew. As we passed through the village, wives and matrons stood at their doors to breathe a blessing as he moved along:

> E'en children follow'd with endearing wile,
> And plucked his *coat* to share the good man's smile;
> His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest,
> Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distrest.

There was no parade of affection, no ostentation of reverence—it was obviously plain, every-day feeling, to which all parties were so accustomed, that it never entered into their heads that it would be noticed, much less admired by a stranger, and should this page meet the eye of any of them, it will be their first intimation that the circumstances were observed.

The description of a well-conducted factory suggests so many gratifying images to the mind, that we cannot withhold from our readers an abstract of a very interesting report of the Township of Hyde, made to the

* Villerme, vol. ii. 59.

Statistical Section of the British Association during its meeting at Newcastle, and published in the 567th Number of the Athenæum.

"Mr. Felkin, of Nottingham, read 'An Abstract of the Annual Report of the Overseers of the Township of Hyde, in Cheshire,' with explanatory statements, the result of recent personal inquiry. There are nine paupers resident in Hyde, four men and five women, of which the former received 26*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.*, and the latter 29*l.* 14*s.* 4*d.*; there were twenty-four other cases of pauper expense, which on the whole amounted to 207*l.* 3*s.* 10*d.* Fifteen fathers paid 62*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.* for their illegitimate children, and sixteen mothers received 64*l.* 12*s.* 10*d.* for the support of such children. This township contained in 1800 only 830 inhabitants, and the poor-rate was 12*s.* per head per annum. At present the number of inhabitants is 11,000, and the poor-rate is 6*d.* per head per annum. The inhabitants are principally employed in spinning yarn, and weaving power-loom cloth, in coal-mining to supply fuel for working the mills, and in the ordinary retail business of a small market town. The unusually low rate for the maintenance of the poor, induced inquiries into the state of the population. Mr. Felkin found from 1500 to 1600 hands employed in the mills he visited, and in other establishments there were 4500 hands. The number of steam-engines is thirty-five. The 1500 or 1600 first mentioned were paid fortnightly, at an average of 1000*l.* per week:—viz. children 3*s.* to 5*s.*; women 12*s.*; men 21*s.* or 25*s.* The exact average of weekly earnings had been ascertained to be 12*s.* 6*d.* A page of seventy-three names of men shewed, on a fair average of earn-

ings, 229*l.* per fortnight, which is 31*s.* 4*d.* a-week each man, or 78*l.* 15*s.* per year. The average earning of 120 families, whose members were wholly employed in those works, was found to be equal to 6*s.* 10½*d.* per head per week, including every individual of them. Some families were so large, and so many of the children employed, that the income of each was from 200*l.* to 300*l.* per annum, and one received upwards of 400*l.* per annum. In these works 48,000 lbs. of cotton wool is spun into yarn, No. 24, and woven by 1200 looms working at the rate of 125 shoots per minute, into 1500 pieces of twenty-five yards long, or twenty miles in length of cloth, averaging a yard in breadth. Few changes take place among the hands; and upon recently taking an accurate census, it was ascertained that none had ever been pauperized, nor had a relative living in the place who had received parish relief. There have been only three committals for felonies in thirty-six years, and these were not of major importance. Twice a year the works are closed for eight days, and the men during this time visit London, Liverpool, the Isle of Man, etc. These excursions are found highly beneficial, the men always returning more contented with their own homes. The appearance of the people is, on the whole, healthy, and as clean as the nature of their several employments will permit. Great freedom was shewn in the intercourse of the workmen with their employers, but without any appearance of disrespect. Some families, as it was well expressed, live a week too fast, and are always indebted to the shopkeepers, but thriftiness on the whole is on the increase. Ten of the men have built out of their savings forty-six freehold houses, pro-

ducing the average rent of 7*l.* 10*s.* each. One young woman, originally a destitute orphan, had saved and laid out on mortgage upwards of 100*l.* One man, who had not received high wages, and whose wife was so infirm as to be carried to bed for more than twenty years, and who had also brought up seven children, has from his savings become possessed of seven houses, producing fifty guineas a-year. The houses constructed by the men for themselves are generally larger and more substantial than those built by the master. They were generally clean and well furnished. The operatives are benevolent to each other; are fond of music; a Bible or Testament was found in every house, and in most cases some political or religious books. An infant and day school are established under competent masters, and are well conducted. Vacant situations in the factory are filled almost invariably by aspirants on the spot. It was hoped, that this example of the effects, which have resulted from restraining influence and judicious kindness, might excite large manufacturers to similar exertions, and that their success would be proved by the best of all possible tests, the absence of pauperism."

It is a probable tendency of the Factory system to increase this healthy and moral relation between the capitalist and the operative, because it is the immediate interest of both parties, but more especially of the master, that such a relation should exist. "No tyrant ever made money" is a common aphorism in the manufacturing districts, and with persons disposed to tyranny, such an aphorism will have more weight than all the reasoning of Aristotle, backed by all the eloquence of Cicero.

Among the operatives there is continually manifested a growing sense of the superiority of moral force to physical strength. Mischievous as *strikes* and *turns out* are, they exhibit features which must afford some consolation to the philanthropist and the moralist. There is a firmness of purpose displayed on these occasions, an iron spirit of endurance, which it would be the worst of all mistakes to confound with sulky obstinacy: it is the repose of conscious strength; it is founded on a mistaken notion of right, but in spite of the mistake, the notion of rectitude whenever present, cannot but be influential, and hence it is an invariable rule, that whenever a strike has led to an act of violence, the whole matter is at once ended—the moral cohesion which held the workmen together is melted and solved by crime; each man is anxious to disclaim any participation in outrage, and quietly returns to his employment.

It is scarcely possible to speak of the vast accumulation of masses of human beings in the manufacturing districts, "the crowded hives" as they have been called, without something like anxiety and apprehension. Our conceptions of them clothe themselves in terms that have something portentous and fearful. We speak not of them indeed as of sudden convulsions, tempestuous seas, or furious hurricanes, but as of the slow rising and gradually swelling of an ocean, which must at some future and not distant time bear all the elements of society aloft upon its bosom. We cannot disguise from ourselves, that in the development of such potent elements, there is much to fear, but there is also much to hope. The principles of safety are not far to seek,

and when they are secured, the principles of prosperity will develope themselves. That many will dissent from these views is highly probable: no new element of society was ever developed that did not excite alarm and produce peril; but that peril has ever been aggravated by the alarmists endeavouring to destroy the element instead of regulating its courses. To destroy the Factory system is not practicable, if it were desirable, nor quite desirable if practicable. But though we cannot destroy, we may use and regulate; we may so mould the course of its development as to render it the source of increased morality, increased prosperity, and increased social happiness to the British empire, and to every individual that empire contains.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIETY, ILLUSTRATED IN THE EFFORTS MADE FOR THE RELIEF AND IMPROVEMENT OF HUMANITY, BY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BENEVOLENCE.

In nothing is the superiority of the modern systems of civilization over the ancient more manifest and striking, than in the institutions which have been established in every Christian country for the relief of suffering humanity. "The poor you have always with you," said the Founder of our faith, not to discourage us from exertion, by describing poverty as an evil without remedy, but to stimulate benevolence, by shewing that there would always be objects for its exercise. In our own days, however, when the elements of society are so numerous, so fully developed, and in such active operation, a doubt has been raised whether the interference of benevolence does not occasion derangements of the social machinery, more mischievous than the evils it undertook to remove; and persons the most conspicuous for their philanthropic feelings, have laid before the world indisputable proof that many of the efforts of public and private benevolence have added incalculably to the amount of misery.

Proposals have been made to subject benevolence to limitations and restraint, and these have been met, as we mentioned in a previous chapter, by denunciations

of cold-blooded philosophy, by assertions that "the head had absorbed the heart,"* and almost express declarations that science is the enemy of the poor. There has been a little violence, and not a little exaggeration displayed by the opposite parties, which might have been avoided if the terms of the dispute had been settled previous to the commencement of the discussion. The proper aim and object of civilization is to remove the evils and elevate the condition of society; the expressed purpose of benevolence is to accomplish this object for one class of society, the poor; and no one ever denied that, to a certain extent, it may attain that end. Benevolence then appears to be an element of civilization, and may therefore reasonably be expected to be subject to the same laws as the other elements which we have previously examined.

Now we have found that every social element which we have examined became false and mischievous from the moment it became absolute and exclusive; it is, therefore, a presumption, that a benevolence which excluded every extrinsic consideration—which looked merely to the gratification of feeling in the giver, and immediate relief in the receiver—may possibly become false and pernicious. It is scarcely possible to avoid this discussion; poverty meets us in every view that we take of civilization, in every question that is raised respecting social order. It is an element of the highest importance in every thing connected with the tranquillity of states and the destiny of nations.

Poverty or misery is the result of a failure to fulfil

* This expression occurs in one of the many pamphlets written against Malthus, but I have lost the reference.

those conditions which society has imposed on social existence; hence what is poverty in one country may be comparative luxury in another. But we must not hence conclude that in such a case, the distress is less real or less entitled to relief, than it would be, if it stood lower in the scale of destitution: the purpose of relief is not to keep man in existence, but to preserve him in society, and therefore it must enable him to fulfil the conditions of that society, or be wholly unavailing.

Men may fail to fulfil these conditions from original feebleness, from disproportion between their powers and the requisites demanded, or from neglect of duty. But though from a consideration of these causes, it might seem easy to form classes of indigence, yet human life does not admit of such logical arrangement. It is not difficult mentally to separate responsible indigence—misery which the sufferer has brought upon himself, from irresponsible indigence, produced by circumstances over which the unfortunate have no control: but when we come to apply this distinction practically in life, we find that those who seem to have been most obviously reduced by the force of circumstances, have still to blame themselves for some acts of folly or imprudence, which at least accelerated their fall; while those who have sunk from indolence, folly, or neglect, have in general some excuse to plead, in events against which no human foresight could have provided.

In an early chapter of this work, indigence was examined in its relation to the fact of civilization, and the general effects of science in rendering benevolence effective were pointed out; it now remains to shew how

benevolence may be rendered operative in forwarding the progress of society, in removing the dark spots of civilization, or, to borrow an illustration from manufactures, in diminishing the friction, and the wear and tear of machinery.

As the pressure of indigence may be considered as the greatest social danger against which the community or the state has to take precautions, the investigation now proposed may be regarded as an inquiry into the conservative principles of society. In the former chapter indigence and benevolence were examined chiefly in their relations to the receivers and bestowers of bounty individually; we now advance farther, and propose to seek how both affect general society. It may not be possible to avoid a little repetition, but this we trust will be excused on account of the importance of the inquiry. It must not, however, be supposed that anything like a complete investigation of the subject is to be expected; such a labour would indeed be of incalculable value, but it would require the devotion of more than one life, and the results would occupy several volumes. It is designed only to touch upon some of the most prominent points which force themselves upon attention, and to examine some of the principles most intimately connected with what may be called—the Conservation of Society.

We have said that original feebleness to fulfil the conditions of social existence is one of the causes of that failure which produces indigence and misery. The feebleness of infancy will at once suggest itself to every mind, and no one will deny that it requires aid and protection. There is very little chance of controversy being raised respecting the nature of the aid: it

consists of two parts, the means of support while the child is unable to work, and such an education as will enable the boy or girl to earn a subsistence hereafter.

Here it becomes necessary to guard against misapprehension. By education we do mean reading or writing, which indeed are means of education, rather than education itself; but instruction in some art or occupation of life, whether belonging to the field or to the workshop, by which means of support may be obtained; and we do not mean that this should be supplied by the state, that is by society, nor without the aid of the state, exclusively by the parents, we merely contend that it should be supplied by somebody. The reason is obvious; unless such instruction be supplied, the child grows up unable to fulfil the conditions of society, becomes a *pariah* or outcast, and is interested in the overthrow instead of in the conservation of the community from which he is necessarily expelled.

Antecedent to education, there is a necessity for providing subsistence, a care which in ordinary circumstances devolves upon the parents. There are three ways in which children may be deprived of the protection destined for them by Providence—the death, the abandonment, or the destitution of their parents. The orphan heads the long list of the unfortunate, and there is none whose claim is more sacred or more generally recognised. But it is not sufficient to inquire whether orphans have lost their father or their mother, or both, it must be further asked whether they have any grown brothers or sisters, or any near relatives, who can contribute to their support, and further, whether they are willing to do so.

Fully recognising the claim of the orphan to subsistence at the public expense, if it cannot be had in any other way, it is still of importance, without any reference to the saving of public money, to inquire whether such support might not be obtained more efficiently and more beneficially to the child from private sources; not by compulsory, but by spontaneous benevolence. It is very obvious that if there be any institution in the country, or any combination of circumstances, tending to weaken the ties of domestic affection, to deaden the moral feelings by which the members of a family are held together, and, in no small number of instances, to prevent near relatives from having even a personal acquaintance—such an institution, or such a set of circumstances, tends greatly to aggravate the destitution to which orphans are exposed when deprived of their parents, and is so far a destructive agent in society. Now benevolence could do much in facilitating family intercourse; the opening of halls of assembly, of public walks and gardens, of exhibitions of the wonders of nature and art, either gratuitously or at a very low price, and the encouragement of innocent recreations, would all diminish the tendency to isolation and selfishness, produced by the crowded state of the population in large towns.

Children abandoned by their parents are not always illegitimate; neither are the parents always culpable. The parents may be in prison, in the hospital, at sea, or detained at a distance by unavoidable accidents. The old custom of making provision almost exclusively for foundlings was palpably unjust; we shall, therefore, avoid a distinction which led to evil consequences. In

all cases of abandonment, the first duty of the administration is to search out the parents: they are the natural protectors of the child, and are not to be exonerated from the obligation, except in cases of urgent and proved necessity. But it is very doubtful whether, when they are discovered, the child should be given back to them: it would seem a wiser plan to compel them to pay, in proportion to their means, a weekly stipend for the support of the child in some public institution. It is not necessary to enter into the painful details of the evils produced by Foundling Hospitals on the one side, or temptations to infanticide on the other; for it is plain that the evils of a public and indiscriminate support of children would be greatly diminished, if not entirely averted, by firmly establishing the principle of parental responsibility, continuing during the entire period that the child is unable to support itself.

The question whether society ought or ought not to take charge of a helpless being abandoned by its parents, has been long ago decided by the general feelings of the community; but in giving such support, society is bound to do all in its power to preserve the principle of parental responsibility inviolate, and while this is kept steadily in view, the subsistence provided for the forsaken infants is a proper exercise of benevolence. A much more difficult question to solve is, the extent of the aid that should be given to poor parents who are not able, without assistance, to maintain their families. Without entering into the danger of encouraging imprudent marriages, or still more imprudent connexions, it seems to be the clear duty of society to provide that

its future members should be so nourished as not to grow up too weak or too sickly for the duties they have to perform; assistance therefore should be afforded; but it would be impossible to assign a general rule, for the circumstances of each case admit of every possible degree of variety.

Society seems to be more deeply interested in the education than in the support of the young; for the number of its members is not of so much importance to its conservation as their character. Having more than once referred to this subject, it will here be sufficient to point out how the education of the young—meaning thereby such a system of training as will best fit them for a useful career in their future life—may be so managed as to become a conservative element of society, and a means for the further development of civilization. In a former chapter we shewed how necessary to the happiness, and almost to the existence of society was the continuance of the domestic affections. Home itself is a school; it nourishes principles of the highest value in human life; every emotion of love, felt or received, is a part of education which cannot safely be disregarded. So far then as is possible, no system of education should totally separate families, or supersede the arrangements of domestic life. Except in very desperate cases, the interchange of affectionate communications between fathers, mothers, children, brothers and sisters, every morning and evening, is of inestimable importance to morality. Cases have come under the personal cognizance of the writer, where parents, vicious but not wholly depraved, have been induced to commence a career of reform by witnessing the gradual

improvement of their children. As they witnessed their progress, and saw them undesignedly revealing the dawnings of intelligence, and the development of moral principles in their little minds, they became more and more attached to them, and unconsciously took those for their examples to whom nature had designed that they should be models themselves. It should, therefore, be a principle in education to keep the bonds of family unbroken. For this reason, everything in the shape of public compulsion should be avoided; there should neither be bribes nor threats held out to the parent, for either of them will render him indifferent to the child's progress, and will render the child careless about pleasing him in turn.

Schools for proselytism are now universally condemned: it was indeed a dangerous thing to teach a child that its parent had erred in the most important of all points—the means of salvation. Such a lesson directly struck at the root of all the respect and reverence which enter so largely into the composition of filial affection; it would have introduced deadly feuds in every family, and banished everything like harmony and concord from the domestic circle. It is not meant that such a result formed any part of the motives that led persons to establish schools more or less directly for the purpose of proselytism: it is certain that they neither wished nor foresaw such a consequence; they only added one to the many instances of the dangers to which benevolence is exposed when its operations are not directed by intelligence.

The feelings of parental responsibility are weakened when the instruction is purely gratuitous. The paltry

saving to the public by demanding payment is not a matter of much importance, but it is of great importance that children should feel themselves indebted to their parents, and that parents should prize the advantages conferred on their children. Many families of the poor could not afford payment in money, but their feelings of self-respect might be preserved if they were allowed to give remuneration by their labour. In the cases of extreme indigence, where payment might be suspended or wholly excused, at the discretion of the managers, the fact should be concealed in the school; the paying and non-paying scholars should sit together without distinction; and if the latter discover their condition, they should be taught to feel that the advantages they receive are owing to the character, the exertions, or the solicitations of their parents—that is, to some exertions made in their behalf. But in every community there is a tendency to estimate the value of anything by the price which it brings in the market. Even children early learn to apply the old saw—

> What is the worth of anything
> But just so much as it will bring?

Hence it is necessary that some third body, such as a corporation or a committee, should intervene between the pupils and the teachers. There is manifest justice in municipalities and parishes bearing a portion of the charge, for education is an object of public utility, and great good results from its being recognised as such by the authorities with which parents and children are most immediately acquainted.

Every one who has investigated the subject, is aware that it is much more easy to establish schools than to

procure the attendance of scholars, even when admission is gratuitous, and they may therefore naturally conclude that the demand of payment will raise fresh difficulties. But persons of limited intelligence generally value at nothing what they receive for nothing. In all cases, the most ignorant parents; that is to say, precisely the class for whose children it is most necessary to provide the instruction of which they are themselves in need, are those who exhibit most repugnance to accept the boon. Our intellectual and moral wants do not make themselves felt, like our physical necessities: hunger and thirst drive men to seek nourishment, but ignorance, so far from searching after mental food, rejects it when proffered. Parents will sacrifice all the advantages which education would confer on their children, to the trifling profit derived from their service in going on errands, and doing light work at home. Girls suffer more from this cause than boys: in the course of the inquiries made into the state of education by that eminently useful body, the Statistical Society of Manchester, many young girls were pointed out by their mothers as too useful to be sent to school. It was found that though some persons do this without regret, yet others deeply lamented that they were thus compelled to sacrifice the interests of their children to present necessities. In some agricultural districts, however, boys are injured in a similar way by being employed to watch flocks of geese and turkeys, or to keep birds away from the corn-fields.

It is not easy to suggest a remedy for such blind prejudices and pernicious practices. In Germany no man is admitted to the full enjoyment of civil rights

who has not received a certain amount of instruction. It is not likely that such a restriction will ever be adopted in England; recourse, therefore, must be had to other powers, to the force of morality and of reason. Persuasion is not in the power of society collectively, it belongs not to any public or constituted authority, but it is at the command of each individual who will venture to exert its influence.

Hitherto we have confined ourselves to the benevolent duties of society, and have said nothing respecting private benevolence. But we cannot too soon express our conviction that public benevolence, dissevered from private, would only widen the perilous separation between the classes of society. There is a fearful chasm, or "deep gulf fixed," between the higher and the lower ranks, which cannot be closed by any single sacrifice, like that of the fabled Curtius; it must be bridged over by a sense of mutual interest, and the communication must constantly be kept open by the interchange of kindness, good-will, and evidences of anxiety for mutual welfare. The rich have it in their power to bestow upon the poor something more valuable than physical relief, more precious than material comfort—they can give sympathy. The alms, however large in amount, flung down with reckless indifference, will not win, and scarcely merit, gratitude: it requires much time, much toil, and much patience, to be a benefactor; and in the formation of such a character, self-respect, cheerfulness, and good-will, are far more important than pecuniary liberality. From no one do the poor receive assistance with such gratitude as from children; and when the sons and daughters of the wealthy visit the children of

the poor in sickness and in trouble, their presence is felt like a revelation of light in the soul. "There is a work of our greatest sculptor," * says the American preacher from whom we have more than once quoted, "which represents a child-angel as conducting another child to heaven. Were it not a beautiful vision realized into life? Oh! when I think what rich families may do for poor families, what ministering angels they might be to raise up the low and the fallen to comfort, to virtue, and to heaven, my heart swells at the contemplation, and I say—when *shall* the vision be realized in life?" †

The preacher goes on to say that he despairs not of seeing it realized; neither does the present writer, for he can, from personal knowledge, testify that what Dr. Dewey says of Boston, is with equal truth applicable to many of our large towns. "It is a fact," he says, "and I must state it with some formality, because to most persons it will be new and astonishing, that there is scarcely a poor family in our city which is not regularly visited by some Sunday-school teacher, or tract distributor, or minister at large, with a view to its moral enlightening and renovation. God bless and prosper the noble band who have thus gone forth into our waste places!—they are young men, many of them rising into life, with their own cares and affairs to attend to: they are young women, some of them of our wealthiest families, and others who depend upon the labours of their needle for their subsistence—noble missionaries of mercy! fair sisters of charity! again I bid them God speed! I bless them for my own sake, and for your sake, and in the name of Christ. . . . .Within two

* Greenough. † Dewey's Moral Views, p. 27.

years, I have learned, that the dread wastes which stretched out before me in darkness and silence are filled with benevolent action, that their long-neglected thresholds are tracked thickly over with footsteps of mercy, and their desolate walls are echoing the voices of Christian truth and love."

This is our answer to those who inquire, by what means the prejudices and the ignorance of the poor respecting education and its advantages are to be overcome; the means are before us: we are to conquer by Christian philanthropy, embodied in life and action, kindling its holy fire within the heart, and diffusing its light and heat to all within its sphere;—by the charity which "suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, which doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." There are sure grounds for such confidence; the Word of Truth hath spoken it—"CHARITY NEVER FAILETH."

The mighty power which controls all human beings in every class and circumstance of life is judicious kindness, and we may safely trust to its efficacy. But there is a danger to which the benevolent, and even the most enlightened of them, are liable, which requires to be mentioned. There are some who make it a condition of affording relief to the poor that they should send their children to school, or what is far less justifiable, to some particular school. No doubt every person has a clear, indisputable right to fix the conditions on which

he bestows any portion of his property; we may add also, that it is a duty to extend the blessings of a sound education; but there still remains the question, whether the exercise of the right tends to the performance of the duty. A sinister purpose is not unjustly suspected whenever a bribe is offered; the great lesson to be taught to poor families is, that the education of their children is an obligation imposed upon themselves, and the attainment of it an advantage gained by themselves. The counsels of mild persuasion will impress such a conviction, but the exercise of constraint will have the very contrary effect.*

The duties of private benevolence do not stop here. The children of the poor require clothing, books, writing materials, and sometimes food, in order that they may profit by their schools. These requisites are sometimes supplied by the public, sometimes by associated charity, and sometimes by private benevolence. Without quite discarding the two former, it seems to be important that more prominence should be given to the latter. There is something painful and repulsive in the sight of charitable uniform and parish livery; a child ticketed and labelled as a pauper is exposed to the danger of losing that self-respect which is the only sure foundation of moral character. An association is likely

* It is, however, necessary to mention, that in one instance within the author's knowledge something not unlike moral force was beneficially exercised. A gentleman who employed several labourers, made it a rule never to pay any sum, however small, without getting a receipt. The shame which those who were unable to write their names felt in setting their marks, though no observation was made on the circumstance, had a perceptible effect in inducing them to seek instruction for their children, and in more than one instance for themselves.

to obtain individual gratitude, but it may provide materials and juvenile dresses at a cheap rate, to be given on the production of tickets from the subscribers, leaving individual discretion to determine whether payment in whole or in part should be taken for the articles, or whether they should be distributed gratuitously. The great lesson of modern civilization is, that in all things we should give importance to man in his individuality; and there is some danger that this truth may be, if not lost, at least neglected, by too implicit a reliance on societies and associations.

It is not enough to shew that children should be sent to school; we have yet to inquire what kind of a school is desirable. The ordinary idea of such an instruction comprises, a room of some sort or other, children seated round on benches, and teachers giving instruction of some sort or other in reading, writing, arithmetic, and perhaps the catechism. Is more to be desired? Assuredly there is: the first great requisite is wanting—a perceived connexion between the business of school and the practical objects of life. Docility, subordination, and attention, can only be secured when the children are taught to understand what all this study is for. Our object is not to make readers, writers, and arithmeticians, but to form men and citizens. Their future lot demands bodily exertion, they should therefore be physically educated; means should be used to ensure bodily health and facilitate muscular development. A great portion of their future comfort will depend on their being what is usually called *handy;* let the boys then learn the use of carpenters' tools, and the girls be instructed in needlework. The most obvious and per-

nicious result of popular ignorance is, that the uninstructed patiently acquiesce in hereditary error on the one hand, and are liable to be deluded by plausible impostors on the other. Let the children then be taught to think; let their powers of observation be cultivated; and let the habit of inference be formed by careful, repeated, and varied questions. They have to pass through a career of life beset with perils, exposed to temptations, inevitably subject to more or less of misfortunes; give them the only principle of strength in the day of trial, and of comfort in the hour of suffering—*write religion in their hearts.* If you ask what kind or form of religion, the Scriptures supply the answer: it must be "first pure, then peaceable, full of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy;" it must "add to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity." This is the description of the religion by which a nation is to be guarded and improved, and it can only be communicated by those in whose hearts it is felt and experienced.

But it may be said that such a system of instruction requires teachers of a peculiar kind, and imposes onerous duties on the school-masters and mistresses. No doubt of it; the art of teaching does not, as Sir Walter Scott says of farming and gig-driving, come by nature. It is sufficiently notorious that the management of schools has been frequently entrusted to decayed tradesmen, superannuated servants, and old men or women past their labour, and that these appointments have been defended on the score of "charity to the poor creatures." But what was it to the poor creatures placed under such incompetent charge? It was nothing

less than organized cruelty and moral murder; the schools, instead of being benefits, were nuisances that ought to be abated. It may be added, that to the effects produced by these schools, the prevalent errors respecting the inutility or even danger of popular education may fairly be attributed: in every case where the writer has examined the examples cited by the opponents of education as proofs of its inutility, and they have not been few, he has found that the schools which the delinquents attend were either defective or pernicious, and consequently that the blame should fairly be attached not to education but to miseducation, which unquestionably is worse than none.

Society having prepared men by education to fulfil the conditions which is has imposed on social existence, has completed the first requisite for its own conservation. In examining the operations of benevolence in this respect we have found that public, associated, and individual charity had each their allotted share in the work, and have intimated some of the evils which may arise from one interfering with the operations of the other, or usurping its functions. There is not an opportunity for distinguishing the proper operations of these kinds of benevolence in the varied forms of charity, but one example is sufficient to shew that they have each their separate departments, and that fixing their several spheres of operation would be a desirable addition to social science.

Benevolence having conducted the young through the stages of infancy and childhood, must not yet abandon the superintendence of its charge; a very important period remains—that between leaving school and fixing

in life; the period of youth with all its appetites, passions, and temptations. This is a subject which is only just beginning to attract public attention, and which, indeed, is rarely taken into account, save by those who have carefully watched the workings and results of education. Lord Ashley has excited a considerable share of interest in one part of the subject—juvenile labour; but the case requires that we should take also into consideration juvenile want of employment, juvenile vagrancy, and juvenile delinquency. The great difficulty in the exercise of conservative influence over this stage of life is, that in youth the feelings of individuality, personal independence and liberty, are the strongest, and that any interference is likely to be resented as an infringement of freedom. It is within the writer's knowledge, that many of the young persons employed in the factories so far from feeling grateful for the protection afforded them by the government, look upon it as an impertinence and almost a grievance. There is no impropriety in setting children to work, provided the nature and amount of the labour be proportioned to their powers; on the contrary, work is an essential portion of the education necessary to those whose sustenance must be derived from toil. On comparing towns where there is a demand for juvenile labour with those in which the demand is limited and irregular, the balance of morals and comfort is on the whole in favour of the former. Habits of vagrancy are the great source of vice and misery in the juvenile population of these kingdoms; and these habits are necessarily formed by young persons who have left school and are unable to obtain employment. Most of the boys who loiter about

the streets, occasionally running of errands, carrying light parcels, or selling tapes, matches, ballads, etc. insensibly adopt a system of petty thieving which generally conducts them to a career of open crime. Previous education does much to counteract this evil, but it is not sufficient; and associated benevolence could scarcely be more usefully employed than in devising some plan of juvenile occupation.

The want of cheap and innocent places of public recreation is daily making itself more felt. Generally the poor in our large towns have only two places where they can meet together—the church or chapel, and the tavern. Now in youth religion rarely exercises the same influence that it does in mature age, and the tavern at such a season of life has more attractions than the place of worship. The experience, however, of those who conduct the Lyceums in Manchester, proves that to the educated youth of the humble classes places where healthy and innocent recreations could be combined with instruction, are more attractive than the alehouse or the haunts of depravity and shame.

It would be very desirable, if means could be devised for accomplishing it, that young persons after leaving the day-schools should be induced to frequent Sunday-schools, and that the latter should be regarded as an auxiliary rather than a substitute. It is not generally known that this was the original design of their institution. St. Charles of Borromeo, by whom they were first established at Milan, felt that the amount of instruction received by the labouring classes in the elementary schools was not sufficient, and he therefore instituted a system of Sunday instruction, for the pur-

pose of teaching young men how to use the arts of reading and writing which they had previously acquired. The example was followed in Germany after the Reformation, and now Sunday-schools are almost universal throughout the Germanic States. Attendance on them is compulsory until the age of eighteen is attained; those above that age may continue to attend if they please, and, in point of fact, great numbers avail themselves of the opportunity, having learned to appreciate its advantages by long experience. In Wurtemberg there are classes formed of persons thirty years of age.*

In connexion with this subject we may venture to suggest the expediency of establishing some special religious service for young persons, in which the purport of the prayers might be explained; the lessons made the subject of instructive comment, and simple lectures substituted for sermons. Every one who remembers their youthful experience must know how difficult it is to prevent the mind from wandering during the church service. Persons of ingenious and reflective minds, who have been instructed in their religious duties, feel that this wandering is sinful, but they cannot help it; their compunctious visitings become less effective by repetition, until a gradual and growing carelessness about the services of religion is formed, which is often more than a counterbalance to the good habit which they form of regularly attending church.

Many persons object to secular instruction on Sun-

* The best account of the German Sunday-schools is contained in a dissertation by Mr. Beil, a Protestant minister, which gained the prize offered for the best Essay on the subject by the Catholic synod of Wurtemberg, in 1829.

day: though we deeply feel that all knowledge is religious, that every revelation of the world of matter or the world of mind, increases the emotions of wonder, love and praise, towards the Almighty Being who has so mightily called both into existence, and so marvellously accommodated them to each other, we feel that it is highly important to give all the secular instruction communicated on the Sunday, a direct religious end and aim. Paley's Natural Theology may be mentioned as a work in which a great extent of interesting and useful information is converted, with great logical skill, to impressing upon the mind the elementary truths of religion, the wisdom and goodness of God as displayed in the works of creation.* A well-instructed teacher using Paley as his text book could give an immense amount of pleasure and instruction to a class of youths in a Sunday-school, and there are few ways in which a teacher could be more usefully employed. Perhaps pardon will be extended for adding that the giving of such lectures would be a useful part of the training of young clergymen; there is an art in conveying popular instruction which like every other art requires to be studied, and is improved by practice.

There is, however, a very great danger to which many well-disposed persons are subject, when they combine religious with secular instruction; namely, dragging in the discussion of the mysteries of religion, where they do not arise naturally from the subject.

* In the admirable schools connected with the Mechanics' Institute of Liverpool, Paley's Natural Theology is used as a school-book; and I have been equally gratified and surprised to find boys of ten and twelve years of age able to comprehend the science of the illustrations, and appreciate the force of the argument.

There is a serious danger, that when religious phrases are rendered "familiar in the mouth as household words," religious subjects may become as little sacred in the mouth as household things. This danger has been forced upon our attention by witnessing the evil effects produced by some of the publications of that very worthy and well-meaning body, the Religious Tract Society. In a Popular History of Quadrupeds, issued under their superintendence, we find the awful subject of human redemption introduced to illustrate the history of monkeys,—the dangers to which the soul are exposed, brought to explain bear-baiting,—and the beautiful parable of the pearl of great price dragged into the account of the mode of hunting sables.* Such

* To prevent any suspicion of exaggeration, I shall extract one passage, and that not the most offensive in the book. "Amongst the beast of prey, the leopard and panther are most to be dreaded (by the monkey tribe): the monkey is their favourite food; creeping cat-like along the branches, they surprise it when asleep; or they lie in ambush among the leaves; or crouch at the river's brink, keeping up an incessant warfare, and affording a perpetual source of terror and caution. Thus it is with the Christian; he is encompassed with enemies more malignant than the leopard, for 'not only does Satan go about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour,' but he bears a foe within—his own evil nature, against which he must be watchful and vigilant, and to overcome which he needs the grace of God, which is promised to all who seek it in the right way. The world too is against him, endeavouring to ensnare him with its allurements; at every step he takes, he finds the ministers of sin and pleasure ready to pounce upon him; they lurk in the mart, in the counting-house, in the shop; they lurk in the splendid mansion and in the humble cottage. Ambition crouches behind the monument of the patriot; ostentation in the bowers of charity; avarice in the gardens of industry. How shall the Christian escape? Christ has opened the way. His grace is all sufficient. To return to our subject. We have already stated the race of monkeys to be extremely numerous as to species, etc." Comment on this wicked nonsense is superfluous.

a form of instruction is absolutely mischievous; ludicrous associations are connected with the doctrines pertaining to man's salvation, and their effect on the minds of the young is for ever destroyed, by their immediate suggestion of incongruous and ludicrous images. It is quite as likely that the young will remember the monkeys when they hear the doctrines mentioned, as that they will learn the doctrines from the history of monkeys.

Among the titles of the books used in the German Sunday-schools, we find Illustrations of Divine Providence, Lessons of Morality, Examples of Virtue, etc.; but not having examined the works, we cannot say whether they are adapted for general use in this country. There is, however, a class of works which it would be very desirable to have prepared, and that is applications of Christian morals to the actual life and business of the operatives. Such works indeed could only be written by those who are familiar with the details of the occupations of the working classes. The value, or rather the necessity, of such information, for the purpose of conveying efficient moral instruction, is admirably illustrated in that useful series of books, the Guide to Trade, recently published by Knight and Co.; they shew that the effects of moral and intellectual lessons are greatly increased when they are directed to the special circumstances of the case.

Evening schools for adults are become common since the advantages of education have begun to be appreciated. They may be rendered of great value, not only in teaching those whose early education has been neglected, but also in continuing and extending the

knowledge of those who have had the advantage of school. The Mechanics' Institutes do not quite meet the necessity of the case, for both in the cost and in the nature of the information they afford, they rather take too high a rank for the generality of the working people. The Lyceums in Manchester, and the Mechanic Schools recently established in Lyons, seem, however, to satisfy the requisite conditions.

The regimental schools established by the Russian government are admirable schools for adults, and are particularly valuable in a country where, according to the military laws, young soldiers are entitled to their discharge after a certain term of service. This is one of the most admirable results of the progress of civilization. Once the disbandment of soldiers was the greatest scourge to a country, for it turned loose on society a multitude of men trained to immorality, and unfitted for any useful or peaceful occupation; now, the discharged soldiers are instructed in the means of becoming valuable members of society, and the army has thus been changed into a training school for civil life.

Little apology can be necessary for dwelling at such length on education as a conservative principle of society, and shewing what enlightened benevolence has already done, and what yet remains for it to do. We have endeavoured to the utmost of our power, to avoid touching on any of the controversial topics that have been introduced into the discussion, for we are persuaded that parties in general have differed about the means rather than the ends. It may be a mistake, but still it is an agreeable error, to believe, as we do most heartily, that those who differed from us most widely

on the subject, were not one whit less anxious than ourselves to promote "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, good-will towards men."

Education is a truly conservative principle: it is not good that nations should linger behind their destiny, for when they do, they must inevitably lose all the advantages derived from nature and events. The moral and intellectual improvement of the country must keep pace with its physical advancement, or the latter may, we should rather say, inevitably will, sow the seeds of deterioration. New arts create new wants; and when they are not watched, from servants they become masters. The very circumstances that give strength and dignity to the national character, unless subjected to the wholesome restraints of principle and knowledge, may become the source of ruin if left to run their course of unregulated wildness. Well may we use the noble words of Milton:—"Lords and Commons of England! consider what a nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors: a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit; acute to invent; subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point, the highest that human capacity can soar to. What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil, but wise and faithful labourers to make a knowing people, a nation of prophets, of sages, and of worthies."

To those who think the education of the lower classes an evil, and that some do so is unfortunately beyond question, we may still plead that, whether abstractedly good or evil, it is inevitable. England cannot with safety stay behind France, Germany, and the United

States; she has too long headed the march of civilization to fall quietly into the rear. Her superior power was derived from her superior knowledge, and the structure cannot long stand if the foundations are undermined. Moreover there is a desire, an intense thirst for information, awakened in the country; and if men are not led to satisfy it at the fountains of living water, they will hew out cisterns for themselves, or drink of the polluted streams that flow from ignorance, presumption, and malevolence. The fact that immoral, seditious and blasphemous books are circulated amongst us, proves not the abuse of education but the want of it. Ten years ago the writer found several shops for the sale of obscene publications in Liverpool; in a recent visit, he searched for them and they were not; and he could not discover any such shop in the entire town.

Benevolence, having prepared men by education to fulfil the conditions of social existence, must continue to superintend them during the struggle. We have seen in a former chapter that one of the most prominent characteristics of barbarism, is a want of providence and foresight; it requires very little acquaintance with the world, to find that this fault in a greater or less degree is the besetting sin of humanity—there is consequently a danger, to which we have more than once referred, of a system of relief becoming a premium to profligacy and indolence, and the destruction of frugality and industry. Still there are cases in which relief must be extended, and these are not confined to sickness or to accident, but are found in the strong and healthy.

Nothing is more fatal to the prosperity of the

labouring classes than frequent and great vicissitudes in the price of the necessaries of life, in wages, and in the amount of employment. It may appear paradoxical to add that such changes are not altogether innocuous when they appear to be wrought in the operatives' favour. In the transitory sunshine of sudden prosperity he adopts new habits, which greatly increase his comforts and his pleasures, but which render his privations more painful when the period of reverse variation arrives. Experience indeed has shewn, that in some instances it is very perilous for an uneducated man to acquire such a superiority in mechanical skill as to raise his wages above the general average; the examples brought under notice of the fatal result, greatly outnumber the instances of advantage.

Leaving aside the political discussion of the causes which produce uncertainty in the price of provisions and variations in the money-rate of wages, we may mention that benevolence can render great assistance in preparing the working classes to meet such vicissitudes, by inducing them during seasons of prosperity to lodge a portion of their earnings in Savings' Banks. The influence of these institutions in the conservation of society is much greater than is usually supposed: every depositor in one of these banks feels a deep interest, a personal stake in the peace of the country and stability of the government, and hence the agents in seditious movements are always anxious to prevent the operatives from making deposits, knowing that those who do so are not likely to become their dupes.

It is scarcely possible in the most rapid glance at the evils to which the working classes are exposed, and the

consequent remedial duties imposed upon public and private benevolence, to omit some notice of the misfortunes to which females are exposed, from their greater susceptible, and from the very limited number of employments by which they can obtain subsistence. It is indeed rather lamentable to find in the present day a tendency to restrict the number of female occupations, and to employ young men in various departments to which women are better suited. When we remember how very small the remuneration awarded to female trades is, and how very few the trades are in which even such a pittance can be obtained, it is impossible to avoid lamenting that their sphere should be still further restricted by fashion or caprice.

It is a common error, derived indeed from statistical returns, that there is less of female than of male misery in the world. The reports of hospitals certainly exhibit a greater number of female than male patients, but the reason is that the hospital separates patients from the family, and that females are bound more strictly by the ties of family than males.

The widow, and the wife abandoned by her husband during the course or perhaps at the close of her career, are compelled at once to change their entire system and course of life: they were accustomed to family existence, they had exercised their faculties in the family sphere, they had enjoyed a support and stay which delivered them from the necessity of providing for their subsistence—they areover whelmed by the sudden feelings of solitude and desertion, at the moment when they are called upon to exercise every faculty in order to render the resources they possess available, and to

open new and untried means of subsistence. This revolution generally surprises them at a time when the approaches of decay and feebleness begin to be felt. The widow may indeed derive some courage from her recollections, and find confidants to share her troubles; but the deserted, often robbed by the perfidy of him who should have supported her, has little to console the bitterness of her reflections, and blushes at a position to which she has been reduced by the criminality of another.

The institutions of society cannot prevent this misery, but they may greatly diminish the number of cases. Much may be effected by increasing the comforts of domestic life, and affording facilities for the indulgence of domestic affection. Not only will the strength of the marriage band be thus increased, but a moral feeling will be generated, which could not be braved with impunity. The depraved husband will dread to abandon his wife and family, when he knows that such a course will render him an outcast from society, and that the finger of scorn will be pointed at him whenever he appears in the streets.

The mischievous proposals of the Socialists respecting the abolition of marriage need hardly be exposed, for they are so repulsive to general feeling that none but the most fanatical of the sect venture to give them utterance. But the fact that such proposals have been made, and that in some of the manufacturing districts they have been heard with attention and partial favour, is a proof that domestic life in these places is not established on such a sound and healthy basis as to render all its advantages immediately perceptible. There is

no greater error than to suppose that a disease is not real when an absurd remedy is demanded. A child in the restlessness of fever will ask for things which would only aggravate its illness, but instead of laughing at its folly we endeavour to cure the disease. The insensate proposals of the multitude, often more wild and more vehement than the demands of the child, are nevertheless symptoms of suffering which is felt without being understood. Physicians inform us that in many cases the seat of pain is not the same as the seat of disease, as for instance in liver attacks, the most accute suffering is frequently in the shoulder; this aphorism may very often be extended to moral evil; in both cases the quack treats the symptoms, but the regular physician seeks for the diseased part of the constitution. We have more than once referred to the condition of the working classes in large towns, and noticed some of the circumstances which prevent the healthy development of the domestic affections, and we think it natural to conclude that the suppression of these feelings, the check imposed upon their growth and the constraint upon their exercise, have tended to weaken the advantages, the importance, and the value of the domestic union. Its value indeed must from some cause or other have been seriously diminished, when a proposal for abolishing it as worthless has been heard not only with attention but in a few instances with some degree of favour.

It would be very desirable if the labouring classes could be induced to make some provision for the contingencies of widowhood by a modified system of insurance, private benevolence would be well employed in

organizing such an institution and contributing to its funds. Benefit societies, or associations for mutual assistance in cases of accident, sickness, maternity, illness or death of children, etc. do not quite meet the exigences of the case, for the expenses of management are generally out of proportion to the amount of funds, and the time required for general superintendence is rather more than operatives can conveniently spare. It is greatly to be wished that the wealthy would contribute to the support of such institutions by subscriptions and donations, but that they should interfere no further in the management than they are solicited to do by the operatives themselves. There is unfortunately a jealousy, a suspicion of some sinister purpose, excited when the higher ranks too authoritatively direct the poor in the mode of employing their own money; and those who labour to benefit them by training them to habits of providence will need much patience, much forbearance, and great firmness of purpose. But benevolence thus exercised will have great conservative influence; it will tend greatly to produce and perpetuate those feelings of mutual kindness and mutual interest which are the bonds that hold together the several classes of society, and prevent those classes from arraying themselves against each other as hostile parties. It cannot be too often repeated, that bestowing money is the very lightest duty of benevolence; labour, time and sympathy are also required, and are far more valuable. When St. Peter said to the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee," he bestowed upon him a boon more precious than any the lords of Judea could have

granted; and though we cannot give such miraculous aid as the Apostles afforded, yet each of us, however limited our means, may communicate more real good by the exercise of prudence and brotherly kindness, than by "giving all our goods to feed the poor."

It is but justice to confess, that many of the preceding suggestions have been derived from observations on the practical operations of the Manchester and Salford District Provident Society; in which the principle of enabling the poor to help themselves is worked out with singular wisdom and success. In referring to an institution, the existence and nature of which only became known to the writer during a casual visit to Manchester, and then accidentally, it may be permitted to remark that some central institution, where the nature and operations of local charities, and the practical improvements suggested in the course of their operations might be recorded, would be of immense value in England. In the United States, the charities in several of the towns, particularly in Boston, have associated together for the mutual communication of information through their delegates, and great advantages have been derived from the system, both in the detection of unworthy claimants, and in the administration of relief in the precise form that rendered it most effective.

Regarding, as we do, misery as the greatest peril to which society is exposed, we have endeavoured to shew how relief may be administered with the most conservative effect. But there is one class, generally neglected, which yet deserves a large share of sympathy, and the mode of treating which cannot be reduced to any general rule. We allude to what Bentham calls the class

of Imperfect Labourers, which is perhaps the largest of all. In the first glance at society, this class very often escapes notice; there is nothing salient or prominent in their condition. A superficial observer would confound them with the lazy and the indolent, and would thereby commit great injustice. The languidness with which they work, the slowness, confusion and embarrassment of their movements, and the want of those comforts possessed by operatives in the same class of life, naturally lead the observer to believe that the sufferers have themselves to blame. But on a little inquiry we find that their responsibility, in a great majority of instances, disappears, and that their apparent listlessness is the result of imperfect intelligence, ignorance, or misdirected energies. By imperfect intelligence we do not mean idiotcy; but there are many stages between a perfectly sound mind, and complete imbecility, which though they have not been classified by science, are easily detected by observation. In ordinary life we meet many destitute of reflection, of foresight, of the habits of calculation and combination, who seem to have no idea of order, and to want judgment sufficient to guide their conduct. Access to the most lucrative trades and professions is forbidden to this unfortunate class, and in the occupations to which they obtain admittance they find their situation very unfavourable. They not only receive less wages, but they are the first discharged whenever the market is dull, and the last employed when times begin to mend. They are miserable, and they know not why; they are consequently easily made the dupes of any charlatan who professes to remedy all the evils of humanity by his new views of

politics or society. So far as the inquiries of a private uninfluential individual has gone, it appears pretty certain that the class of labourers, commonly called "botches," supplies the greatest number of recruits to the apostles of sedition.

The progress of machinery has been very advantageous to the imperfect labourers, for it has rendered the exercise of dexterity and judgment less important than that of manual faculties, which they acquire by a kind of mechanical imitation. Some of them appear to have a glimmering consciousness of this truth, and their ignorant hostility to machinery has consequently abated. But a perfect remedy for their misery cannot easily be devised, and they must in general be left to the care of private benevolence.

Ignorance arising from a defective or neglected education can often be distinguished from the class just described, but in the majority of instances it is not easy to discover the difference. There is an education of the eye, and of the hand, to which attention is rarely paid in places of public instruction, but which is of the highest value to the operative. So long as the working classes are excluded from exhibitions of the beauties of nature and art, they must necessarily be deficient in correctness of taste, in play of fancy, and in the *coup d'œil,* which enables the operatives of the Continent to surpass us in fancy patterns. It would lead us too far from our immediate subject to enter further on this discussion, but we may refer to the accounts of the various exhibitions at Mechanics' Institutes, to prove how valuable the access to works of art is in giving that education of the eye which has hitherto been the greatest want of the English operative.

The conservative influence of society must be exercised in remedying not only physical, but moral evils. Crime must be prevented, and the means of prevention are the only proper objects of penal legislation. It was long a prevalent error, and it is still a very common mistake, to suppose that society inflicted punishment on a criminal in vengeance for the wrong he inflicted upon it, and thus the necessity of inflicting a certain amount of suffering was closely associated with the administration of justice. This mischievous union between ideas which have no necessary connexion, rendered the criminal codes of most countries sanguinary and cruel; it led people to direct their indignation against the criminal instead of the crime, and there were those who estimated the value and efficiency of administrative justice by the amount of misery it inflicted on the few, instead of by the amount of protection it afforded to the many. There were even eminent publicists who looked upon criminal law as nothing better than a substitute for private vengeance, and therefore felt disposed to measure the pain it should inflict by the amount which the injured might deem it reasonable to demand. No one ever in set terms declared that administrative justice ought to be nothing more than legalized revenge; but many have clamoured for increased severity, have complained that there is not enough of hanging, of transporting, and of flogging, because those who have been guilty of certain crimes deserved no mercy. Even Dr. Johnson defines punishment to be "any infliction or pain imposed in vengeance of a crime." It is however far from clear that there is any connexion necessary between the notions

of justice and retribution; it would seem that such an association should be confined to the retaliatory laws of barbarism, and that in civilized life, law should not be regarded as the agent of revenge, but as a conservative element of society, limited and guided in its operations by what is essentially necessary to the fulfilment of its conservative functions. Thus viewed, we find that the law ought not to inflict any pain, unless when such infliction is indispensably necessary for the suppression of crime; and that the amount of suffering to be inflicted must be measured by the efficacy of the punishment in deterring the offender from repeating his crime, and of the example in deterring others. Vengeance, retribution, and retaliation, form no part of the duties of society, for one great object of society is to prevent the development of such passions. Mercy must be regarded not as the opposite of justice, but as a means by which the ends of justice may often be most efficiently attained; and the only ends or purposes of justice that we can recognise, are the conservation and protection of society.

Were vengeance alone taken into account, the ends of justice would be sufficiently attained by getting rid of the criminal; such is the expedient adopted in all lands and ages of barbarism. But when the efficacy of punishment in restraining crime is taken into account, the wholesale butchery of executions begins to appear of very questionable policy, and a question arises whether crime has not been increased by the means adopted for its repression. Some persons have raised a doubt as to the right of society to take away life in any instance; but the doubt would scarcely have been raised, had not

the mind been previously mystified by the notions of revenge and retribution: thus viewed, it is sufficiently absurd that the remedy which society provides for the loss of one of its members, is forthwith to get rid of another; but discarding this antiquated error, there can be no difficulty in confessing that society has a right to secure its own conservation by taking a life when no other means would be adequate to the purpose.

Take murder as an example: it is not sufficient justification for executing a murderer, to say that he has taken the life of another man; it must further be shewn either that there is a strong probability of the criminal's persevering in a criminal career if allowed to escape with life, or that the fact of his escape would encourage others to follow his example. It must also be borne in mind, that the execution of the criminal may have consequences extending beyond himself, and involving the innocent in his sufferings; his wife becomes a widow, his children orphans, the finger of scorn is pointed at the members of his family. Here is a vast amount of misery, which society inflicts in order to prevent misery, and here are manifest grounds for demanding that a clear case of necessity should be made out to justify the infliction.

Does the dread of death prevent the commission of murder? There is at least a doubt of its efficacy. In cases where the murder has arisen from party-spirit, as in the agrarian disputes between landlord and tenant in Ireland, and the fierce excitement produced by trades' unions, murders on one side and executions on the other are regarded as the legitimate modes of warfare, and not unfrequently the execution of the criminal is

regarded as a martyrdom, and his funeral resembles the triumph of a canonization. On the other hand, the opposite party views the execution as a victory over an enemy; exulting looks are seen, and sometimes words of triumph are heard, when the victim appears on the scaffold: a double demoralization is thus effected; those who indulge such feelings brutalize themselves, while they inflict wounds on their opponents which rankle and fester into the worst malignity of revenge. The escape of Frost and his associates was in this view fortunate; for their execution might have led to an exhibition of exultation on one side, which would have produced deep and deadly feelings of animosity on the other. Fatal instances of such a result might easily be quoted, but they would open wounds which are not yet healed, and might perhaps lead to political controversies, of which there are already more than enough in the world.

It is very doubtful whether the exhibition of a public execution, under any circumstances, produces the moral effect which would alone render it justifiable. Those who have been present on such occasions are well aware that the conduct of the crowd assembled round the scaffold displays little of the reverential awe with which the departure of a fellow-creature from this world should be contemplated.* Heartless jokes, obscene jests, wanton merriment, crime labouring in its vocation, are mingled in the view with disgust and horror; so that one is almost tempted to adopt the expression

* The reader is referred to an admirable paper on the execution of Coirvoisier, published in Fraser's Magazine for August; it is the production of a philosopher, a gentleman, and a Christian, and makes one anxious to discover the name of the author.

of a German nobleman after witnessing an execution at the Old Bailey, "the criminal ought not to be pitied for quitting a world composed of such miscreants as have witnessed his departure from it."

It is not meant to assert that Capital Punishments ought in all cases to be abolished; our purpose is merely to shew that the question of their expediency is fairly open to consideration, and that in this, as in every other matter of doubtful policy, society is bound to investigate the conservative influence of its institutions. If the infliction of death as a punishment be not the best mode in which penal legislation can effect the conservation of society, it must be mischievous and pernicious; for it prevents the best mode from being sought and adopted. This reasoning has nothing to do with sympathy for the criminal; his fate may or may not deserve pity, and perhaps, in some cases, the affectation of sentimental tenderness towards an atrocious criminal may have so disgusted men of sense, as to lead them at once into the approbation of capital punishments. But we view the question solely in its relation to society: the simple point of dispute is, whether the system is or is not beneficial; and it would require some little hardihood to make a very positive answer in the affirmative.

The whimsical error in penal legislation, that the best thing society could do was to rid itself of the criminal, was manifested in the system of secondary punishments, adopted when the advancement of civilization imposed a check on the periodical carnage of executions. Transportation was adopted: the guilty person was removed from the society which he had outraged, and this being effected, judges and legisla-

tors folded their arms, satisfied that they had performed their duty, and consequently that there was an end of the matter. But in this mode of proceeding it was forgotten that the entire aim and purpose of society in inflicting punishment were completely defeated. The influence of example could not be preserved when the victim was removed to another hemisphere. In a new colony, where labour was difficult to be procured, a clever convict, whatever had originally been his offence, was sure to obtain a relaxation of discipline, and perhaps some degree of favour. Many that went out poor, became rich, and sent home such flattering accounts of their circumstances, that their situation was envied by their former companions. Transportation began to be viewed as a reward rather than a punishment, and thus the legislature had actually offered a premium for crime.

"My attention," said the Archbishop of Dublin when introducing this subject to the notice of the House of Lords, "was forcibly called to this subject a good many years ago, from my observation of the effects of the transportation-system in my own neighbourhood in Suffolk. I perceived the every way demoralizing tendencies of the system; which were more and more forced upon my notice in proportion as I extended my inquiries. I found the relatives and former neighbours of transported convicts receiving such favourable accounts of the situation of those convicts—sometimes true, and sometimes false, but always alluring—that the punishment (so called) of transportation had the effect of a bounty on crime, and the condition of the convict with light work, and not only plentiful but

luxurious maintenance, could not but be regarded with envy by the poor labourer, who, with hard work and scanty food, was struggling, and often struggling in vain, to keep himself and his family from the parish."

So far is this statement from being highly coloured, that it errs on the opposite side; poor persons in various parts of England, when brought to trial for crime, declared that they committed the offence in order to obtain the boon of transportation. Criminals, when sentence was passed upon them, returned thanks to the judges for having awarded them a great kindness, and when a convict-ship was about to sail, the passengers displayed more joyous excitement than if they were going on a trip of pleasure.

The punishment usually inflicted on the convicts was assigning them as servants to landowners. The Archbishop of Dublin has described the result in a few emphatic sentences. "Taken as a system of *slavery* alone, though that is but one portion of the vast and complicated mass of evils belonging to the system—as a system of slavery, it is in many points worse than negro-slavery. The master of negro-slaves, most of whom probably have been brought up in his family from childhood, and none of whom are necessarily tainted with crime, has every moral inducement, if he is at all capable of good feelings, to treat them well; and at any rate, from having a *permanent* property in them, has at least the same pecuniary interest in their well-being as in that of his cattle. The master of convict-slaves, on the contrary, has no permanent interest in them: his sympathy with them, and indulgence of them, will be found greatest (as has been proved in evidence) when

he, himself being a profligate character, makes them companions in debauchery or associates in crime; and the more license and indulgence is usually shewn to the more desperate ruffian, where revengeful passions might be formidable. Then indeed, and when the master happens to be of a timid disposition, and his servants daring and hardened characters, it appears that (in remote situations especially) the relation between the master and servants—the jailer and prisoners—is often very nearly reversed. In short, though it must be admitted that a community consisting of *masters and slaves* is bad, and that a nation of *jailers and prisoners*,—of criminals I may say, and executioners,—is bad, the union of the two in one system,—the system of punishing criminals by assigning them as slaves, to labour for the benefit of private individuals—is incomparably the worst of all. Yet this, which is but one out of the many evils of the Transportation-system,—the one which it has been at length resolved to put an end to,—continued to be carried on, in spite of all remonstrance,—in spite of the fullest exposure of its noxious effects,—for more than fifty years before the truth was acknowledged and acted on!"*

* In many other subjects besides this, it is curious to observe how slowly and reluctantly men are induced to admit practically, and to act upon, conclusions of which their understanding has been convinced, when *habit* and prejudice are opposed to them. It is a long process first to effect such a conviction; and when this is accomplished, the task is but half-completed; their *habits* of thought and of action continue, by a kind of *vis inertiæ*, to move in the same course, till time and frequent repetition shall have rendered *familiar* to their minds the conclusions which reason has established. The words which Shakspeare, in mere sportiveness puts into the mouth of Dogberry, seem in some such cases to be literally applicable, It hath been *proved already*

The effect of aggregating all the criminality of England in one limited spot, on the morals of the community thus formed, exceeds all powers of description. Lord Bacon had in the strongest terms expressed his own conviction of the impolicy as well as the immorality of such colonization. "It is," said that great man, "a shameful and unblessed thing to take the scum of people and wicked condemned men to be the people with whom you plant; and not only so, but it spoileth the plantation; for they will ever live like rogues and not fall to work, but be lazy and do mischief and spend victuals, and be quickly weary, and then certify over to their country to the discredit of the plantation."* To colonists of such description, Lord Bacon has indeed bequeathed in vain the exhortation which follows:—"Let men make that profit of being in the wilderness that they have God always and his service before their eyes!"

Experience has fully proved that convict colonization is "a shameful and unblessed thing." A society has been formed, in which "not to be corrupted is the shame;" and improvement cannot be expected until the flow of the polluted streams into this receptacle for the moral filth of England is stopped at once and for ever.

Transportation is justly condemned as a system of punishment, because, without effecting the conservation of society in England, it has a destroying influence on society in Australia; it has not done the good, and it has done more than the evil anticipated. Fortunately for humanity, the perverse notion of the application of

that you are no better than stark knaves; and it will go near to be *thought so* shortly.—*Note by Archbishop Whately.*

* Essay on Plantations.

the law as an instrument of vengeance has not been introduced into the question of transportation; it has been fairly tried on its merits, as a principle conservative of society, and this simplification of the issue has enabled the public to pronounce its sentence with promptitude and certainty.

It is surprising to find how very slowly the possibility of reforming the criminal came to be taken into account in penal legislation, and how much it is yet opposed by prejudices arising from the absurd and vulgar notion of vengeance. There are doubtless limits to the application of this principle in penal legislation; mischievous leniency, as well as mischievous severity, may arise from fixing attention on the criminal rather than the crime, and the only security against either error is to keep steadily in view that the only object of punishment, the only justification for the infliction of pain, is the conservation of society.

Before entering on the consideration of imprisonment as a punishment, it may be necesary to observe, that a system of preventive legislation may do much to avert crime. Unnecessary exposure of valuable property in the way of those who are most likely to yield to temptation, should be regarded as an offence against society; it is a direct temptation to theft, and those who behave so imprudently are accessories before the fact. Education may be considered as one of the most efficient measures of preventive police, and its efficacy in checking juvenile delinquency has been abundantly proved in the manufacturing districts; but a system of juvenile employment, which would not too severely tax the health and strength of the young, would be a very

desirable improvement in society—for all the inquiries we have made concur in exhibiting juvenile vagrancy as the principal cause of juvenile delinquency. Mr. W. B. Neale, in an admirable pamphlet on juvenile delinquency, thus describes the consequences of early vagrancy:—

"The existence of juvenile vagrancy is in the highest degree pernicious to society, for while it tends directly to vice, by blunting the moral sense, especially of the female, and exposes it to all the contaminating influences of wandering idly up and down the surface of a great city, it at the same time lays the foundation in the mind of all those propensities to idleness and dependence upon charitable relief, and to maintain existence by any other means than that of honest industry; than which a frame of mind more fraught with pernicious consequences, both to those who are under its influence and to society, cannot readily be conceived: it is a habit which bears its bitter fruit, and accompanies them through life. Juvenile vagrancy is, in fine, the first step in juvenile delinquency, and is the high road to felony, pauperism, and prostitution.

"Sent forth at an early age as beggars, and venders of matches, tape, sand, etc., they are early instructed to add theft to vagrancy; and instinctively conscious that all is not right with them, they even at this early period of life shun the constable as the enemy of their race: and those who are best acquainted with this class can testify to the precocity of their minds, the ingenuity of their devices, and the cunningness of their shifts and evasions, when questioned by the agents of the police.

"The aptness of the infant mind to receive the seeds

of evil as well as good impressions, is well known; and in the class of whom we are speaking, this ingenuity of mind is called forth and quickened by chastisements and privations.

"The child is sent out by its indigent parent, its hostile step-mother, or still more interested and unfeeling guardian, with strict injunctions not to return home without having obtained a certain sum of money, or quantity of provisions.

"If it has been obtained, well and good, and he returns home to receive the commendation of his parent and to share in what he has himself been instrumental in obtaining; but, on the other hand, should he fail, through negligence, to procure the requisite supply, he dares not venture home,—or if he does, nothing but chastisement awaits him, and he is driven forth and denied shelter and food.

"Unhappily, this system is too often put in practice; and so much so, that even where it does not exist, it is a ready tale with young vagrants who, when soliciting relief, seek to excite sympathy for their case, by declaring that they dare not venture home unprovided."

The child is thus not merely tempted but coerced to supply by peculation and petty thefts the amount he is required to bring home, and the dishonest habits thus acquired grow with his growth and strengthen with his strength, until he is educated and trained up a hardened criminal. In some parts of the the United States, the evils of juvenile vagrancy have been so severely felt, that the public are empowered to take up all young persons wandering about the streets, who cannot give an account of themselves. It would probably be im-

prudent to introduce such a system in England while so many ignorant prejudices have been excited against the police force;—though England has long been the land of freedom, the true nature of liberty is not universally understood in the country; it is not felt that order is one of its most essential elements.

But in spite of all efforts for prevention, crime must be expected to come, and some system of punishment for its repression is necessary. Imprisonment is the usual punishment inflicted on juvenile offenders, but the mode in which it is generally applied is equally inefficient and pernicious. We extract the following account from Mr. Neale's pamphlet; we can vouch for the accuracy of his descriptions from our own personal investigations:—

"It is not to be supposed that the delinquent can have continued for any great length of time committing a variety of depredations, without incurring suspicion, or having been taken in some criminal act. Suspicion, therefore, we will suppose has attached to him, and he is taken in some overt breach of the law, and conducted before the magistrate. If the case is not pressed against him, or the evidence is not satisfactory, he is of course acquitted; but what is the result in the event of his being convicted? It is his first offence, and in consideration of this circumstance and that of his tender years, he is given over to his parents, that is, *to those very persons who had not either the inclination or the power to restrain him within the bounds of the law.*

"If he has not been taught to rely on this pardon, he has at least escaped with impunity; and again exposed to the evil influences which originally led him

into crime, and relying once more upon the lenity of the magistrate, he shortly has again recourse to his evil habits, and is again detected and brought to the bar of justice.

"This is the second offence, and parental restraint having failed, he cannot of course be consigned to parental discipline, but is committed to prison for the short period of ten or fourteen days. Hardly then has he been confined when the period of his liberation has arrived, and while any salutary impression which a temporary restraint may have had upon his mind becomes daily more faint, he has learnt an important lesson of a contrary tendency; he too has been in the much dreaded prison, and assuming as it did in his instance so mild a form, he has learnt to despise the majesty of the laws, and to wonder that the magistrate or the prison should ever have appeared to him as a terror or a bugbear. Under the influence of these sentiments, and the salutary restraint of fear being removed, timidity has given place to courage, and he is found engaged in some more aggravated contravention of the laws.

"He must now be regarded as incorrigible, neither parental restraint nor a brief imprisonment have had any influence upon him; his sentence therefore is, that *he be imprisoned for three months, and twice whipped.* This period of restraint, likewise, too rapidly elapses to produce any salutary moral effect, and the 'corporal pangs,' however smarting and acute, at best but excite a LEGAL repentance, and too often raise in the mind of the sufferer a secret vengeance against that society which has inflicted it."

Imprisonment is designed to answer two purposes—intimidation by punishment, and moral improvement by subjecting the offender to a compulsory course of restraint and virtuous training. In the latter respect prisons are benevolent institutions, or at least are capable of being made such, and therefore the magistrate who discharges a juvenile culprit performs an act of cruelty and not of mercy. The principle of forgiving first offences is bad and mischievous; it encourages the delinquent to take the first step in crime, and in this as in many other things, "*ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute.*" Imprisonment for short periods does not afford time for the course of moral discipline to have its due effect, while the very effort to establish a moral influence over the mind of the criminal leads to a relaxation of the penal sufferings. Thus the system acts neither as an intimidation nor a reformation, and consequently must tend to increase crime.

Whipping is a barbarous custom, and in many ways tends to defeat the moral purposes of punishment. It degrades the victim in his own estimation; and when self-respect is destroyed there can be little hope of amendment. Even as an intimidation to others its effect is weakened, if not destroyed, by the pride which criminals display in evincing heroism under the smart of the lash. The penitentiary system for juvenile offenders appears, however, to afford a reasonable prospect of repressing crime. We shall, therefore, extract a description of the institution for the reformation of juvenile offenders at Rotterdam, from Mr. Victor Cousin's admirable Report on the State of Education in Holland.

"I saw (he says) at Rotterdam, a charitable institution so singular in its nature, and where primary instruction forms so important a part, that I must say a few words respecting it—I mean the Penitentiary for Young Boys. I shall give a sufficiently correct notion of the excellent system upon which the prisons in Holland are managed by saying that the central prisons are divided into two classes: the one for young persons below eighteen or twenty years of age, and the other for older persons. The Central Penitentiary for young persons, established at Rotterdam, used to receive young prisoners of both sexes: they were rigidly separated from each other in the court-yards, and in the rooms where they got their meals, and there were distinct schools for each sex. In spite of these precautions, however, experience demonstrated the necessity of separating them entirely, and having one penitentiary for boys and another for girls. The girls are at Amsterdam, the boys at Rotterdam; I examined the last with minute attention.

"The object which they have in view in these places is, not only to make the young people submissive and correct in their conduct during the time of their imprisonment, but to improve them. The imprisonment itself and the severity of the discipline constitute the just punishment of the offence; for it is indispensable that there should be punishment: but the chastisement would not be adapted to its proper end if it did not tend to improve the criminal, and every possible care is taken that the prison should deserve the title of a penitentiary.

"They work upon the young offenders, first, by the discipline to which they are subjected, in order to give

them notions of order and submission to authority; and secondly, by the labour they have to go through, for which purpose there are workshops of various kinds. The system of the house is military: all the officers are dressed in uniform, and maintain a grave and decent deportment, which, of itself, is an excellent lesson. The diet is wholesome, but coarse; and so it ought to be. There is not a separate cell for each prisoner, but the dormitories have only a small number of beds, which are hammocks, and every thing was clean, and neat, and conveniently arranged. I should have seen things better if I had been accompanied by my brother academician, Mr. Berenger, who would have assisted me greatly in interrogating my guides. At all events, I am a competent judge of the school which is in the house, and it is that which is the great instrument of amelioration. This school consists of about sixty young prisoners, all dressed alike, in coarse but clean linen jackets and trousers. I was very much struck with the progress which their copybooks shewed that they had made, in a very short time; and I was particularly pleased with the singing. We must, however, recollect that it was not in intelligence that these youths were wanting. The master is a young man, with a grave and mild deportment, who seems like the father of his pupils. It had been proposed to give him one of the gaolers as his assistant, to keep order; this he declined, assigning as his reason, that it would look as if he was afraid; and so he manages the whole school himself. He devotes his whole life to this sacred duty; he knows every one of his pupils individually, and endeavours to gain their confidence. He does not lose sight of them,

even after they have left the house, but continues to look after them; they get situations upon his recommendation, and he keeps a regular correspondence with every one of them. But such a system would be impossible if the pupils were not limited to a small number: were not this the case, all that one man could do would be to instruct them as well as he could, so long as they remained under his immediate care; and it would be impossible for him to look after them in their future career. If in such an establishment the number of prisoners be considerable, they ought to be carefully separated, and committed in divisions of fifty or sixty at most to the care of one master, who should be specially charged with the duty of instructing them, and not only responsible for their education during the time they continue, but to watch over them afterwards.

"I was surprised to learn that this Central Prison for boys, the only one in all Holland, did not contain more than from sixty to eighty prisoners; so that, adding seventy who were expected from the depôt at Leyden, there were at most only 150 out of a population of 2,500,000. To find a solution of this phenomenon, I had only to reflect upon the excellent schools I had everywhere met with. The charges upon the towns for the support of schools produce this result—that there are fewer crimes, and consequently less to pay for police, and for the prevention and punishment of crime. In Rotterdam, a commercial town of nearly 100,000 inhabitants—filled with merchandise, and where the number of canals and bridges affords great facilities to depredators—robberies are rare, and burglaries accompanied by acts of violence so much so, that a gentleman

who accompanied us assured me that it would be difficult for them to mention any."

Penitentiary imprisonment is, in fact, a system of education which society is bound to afford for the interests of its own conservation. Mr. Bentham has well observed that, "in regarding education as an indirect mode of preventing offences, it requires an essential reform. The most neglected class must become the principal objects of care. The less the parents are able to discharge this duty, the more necessary is it for the government to fulfil it. It ought not only to watch over orphans left in indigence, but also over the children whose parents no longer deserve the confidence of the law with regard to this important charge; over those who have already committed crimes, or who, destitute of protectors and resources, are given up to all the seduction of misery. These classes, absolutely neglected in most countries, become the hot-beds of crime." *

In applying this principle, we must, however, expect to be met, in many instances, by a fierce opposition, and an indignant clamour against interference with liberty and parental right. There never was any measure devised by public authority for the benefit of the poor which a system of audacious misrepresentation did not induce the poor to view in the first instance with suspicion and dislike. But perseverance under calumny as it is the most onerous, so it is also the most stringent duty of philanthropy; and it is to be hoped that the unfortunate parents and children who would most immediately feel the pressure of the penitentiary system,

* Principles of Penal Law, chap. xx. sect. 4.

would soon perceive its benefits, and that this experience would change their hate into gratitude.

The world must make a considerable advance before prisons will be generally regarded as institutions of benevolence—hospitals for the cure of the moral diseases which afflict humanity; but until they are so regarded, they will not quite succeed in effecting their proper aim and object, the conservation of society. At present, too many rest satisfied if pain is inflicted on the criminal; as if the infliction of pain were not always an evil, which can only be justified by its prevention of a greater evil. There are, however, gratifying proofs, that the true theory of imprisonment and legal punishment is making a great advance amongst us; there is consequently no necessity to apologize for dwelling at such length on this conservative principle of society, for its importance is obvious, and its interest is daily increasing.

The greatest conservative principle of society, and that which it behoves enlightened benevolence most zealously to extend, is religion. "If," says Dr. Dewy, "I looked upon the frame of society only with the eye of an artist; if I cared not what became of human government, or the human character, or anything else human, I should still be compelled to see and admit that there is no basis for human welfare, individual, social, or national, none conceivable or possible, none provided by the great Framer of the world, but intelligence and virtue." But in order that religion should gain the mastery and hold the dominion, justly its due in social organization; it must be brought into close contact with human nature, it must have free access to

individual minds and hearts. In order that this great principle should work its way, it must be divested of all exclusiveness. Every page of its history shews that it is exposed to great danger from this source of corruption. "Men have worshipped God, and at the same time hated, persecuted, cast out, crushed and destroyed their fellow-men. It was against this error that an Apostle set himself, when he said, 'he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how doth he love God whom he hath not seen?'"

In viewing religion as a conservative principle of society, as a social, rather than an individual blessing, there is some danger of being misunderstood. It may be supposed, viewing it in only one of its relations, as the nature of this work compels us to do, that we are either ignorant of its importance in other relations, or that undue preponderance is given to that more immediately under consideration. It is by no means easy to guard against such misconception or misrepresentation; for although the social importance of religion is universally acknowledged, it is rarely viewed exclusively in its social relations, and perhaps many may deem it improper to discard all reference to the connexion between religion and the eternal salvation of the soul. Still, as this latter relation belongs to the individual mind, it can only be introduced into the consideration of the conservative principles of society, where this becomes a security for personal probity and purity of conduct in this life.

Religion, instead of being exclusive should be liberal, generous, and gracious; in order to be efficient and practical, it should extend its influence beyond the

range of church-membership. There is one obvious advantage in an Established Church, it regards all the people as its children, and invites them freely to participate in its ordinances. In America, we find that similar generosity is exhibited by the Episcopalians, the Catholics, and the Unitarians, while the other sects refuse participation in their ordinances to those who are not admitted into the several societies by vote; and this principle of exclusiveness produces a very sad effect upon the public mind—it keeps alive a spirit of Pharisaic intolerance, and increases the number of those who "trusting in themselves that they are righteous, despise others." The same evil in kind, though certainly not in degree, exists among ourselves; there are those who seem to think that the comprehensiveness of our Church is an evil, instead of being its greatest strength and its purest beauty.

Though far from believing that creeds and forms are matters of indifference, we may doubt whether proselytism to any particular sect or denomination should form any part of the application of religion to social improvement. What society wants, are the practical every-day virtues of justice, honesty, brotherly kindness, gentleness, candour, and truth; not the acquiescence of the intellect or the heart in any particular plan of salvation. A proselyting principle carried to excess works double evil; it fosters spiritual pride and confidence in a name on one side, it rouses suspicion and angry passion on the other. No small evil has been wrought in society by the confusion in common parlance between religion and religious profession or denomination; the error respecting the names has led to

error respecting the things. It has led many to suppose that it would be an impertinent interference to give religious instruction to those who do not belong to our own congregation, and the same error has led multitudes to reject such instruction when offered. A professed purpose of proselytism defeats its own ends by the hostility which it excites, and a concealed purpose of proselytism is as base and as dishonourable as any other form of hypocrisy. There is but one legitimate way of enlarging the religious community to which we belong, it is by manifesting the superior purity of our doctrines by our lives and conduct; let us be honest and upright, temperate and forbearing, kind-hearted and true; pure religion doth not "strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear its voice in the streets"—"it loveth not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." This is the religion wanting for the improvement of society—a religion of kindness and gentleness, and generosity and candour, and modesty and forbearance, and integrity and self-respect and mutual respect.

That these sentiments will be displeasing to many worthy persons is unfortunately probable; but as they are honestly held, they may be candidly told, without giving an offence to any save those who confide in the infallibility of their own opinions. "The snail," says the Hindoo proverb, "sees nothing beyond its shell, and believes it the finest palace in the universe:" there are some whose vision is not less limited by the self-sufficiency of their own minds, and from them toleration of a difference of opinion is as little to be expected as it is to be desired.

The importance of keeping the religion of society, or rather the application of religion to the purposes of society, free from every principle of exclusion, can be fully appreciated only by those who have learned by practical inquiries to estimate the number of those to whom religion, save in name, is utterly unknown. In our large towns, from one-fourth to one-third of the population are under no pastoral care, and in the way of no direct religious influence. The causes of their absence from places of worship, and of their being unconnected with churches or religious societies, are many and various. Some want suitable attire; others have removed from one quarter of the town to another, and after having been thus severed from their old religious connexions, are too careless or too indolent to form new associations; the charge of young children detains others; and many are kept away by the pride which deters them from being seen in free-sittings. The author once spoke to an operative who was habitually absent from church, but who was honest, respectable and intelligent, on the impropriety of his continued absence from public worship. He replied, "I cannot afford the rent of a pew, and were I seen in the free sittings, my employers would think me so helpless as to be at their mercy, and would reduce my wages." Some are absent from insensibility and indifference to the claims of religion, others from recklessness, vice or profligacy; finally, some are detained by sickness or old age. The necessity of doing something for the thousands thus left destitute of Christian teaching and Christian consolation, has been strangely forgotten in the schemes of philanthropy.

The Rev. Joseph Tuckerman, of Boston, was the first who proposed a plan to remedy this evil, by appointing a minister at large, who, without any distinction of sect, should visit the poor in their dwellings, and convey to them the consolations of religion. Those who were chosen to fulfil this arduous duty, were selected from various Christian denominations, for the object involved nothing sectarian. It was soon found that direct religious instruction formed but a part, though doubtless the most important part, of the duties which devolved on a "minister at large." He had to encounter misery in all its most harassing and agonizing forms; he had to see humanity retaining nothing but its form, under circumstances where he could not previously have believed that existence could be supported. How could he hope to make religious impressions, or to exercise religious influence upon the soul, while the naked, shivering, starving body asks for fuel, food or clothing, as the greatest of blessings? He was obliged to become their teacher in domestic economy, to shew them how they might make, mend, and save; to point out the evils of intemperance and extravagance; to aid in the charge of their children, who, if left exclusively to their parents, would neither receive instruction in a school nor discipline at home. He had to prevent the young from growing up in ignorance, lawlessness, vagrancy, and crime. To the character of a religious teacher, he was compelled to add that of a domestic adviser, and experience shewed that his services in the latter capacity added immensely to the weight and influence of his instructions in the former.

But much more was required of the minister at

large: he was sent indeed *to* the poor, but he was sent *by* the rich, and he found himself in the position of the fittest almoner of their bounty. The ministry at large was by the mere force of circumstances brought into immediate connexion with the associated charities of Boston, and thus every exertion of benevolence was hallowed by its union with Christianity. While its beneficent spirit preached the Gospel to the poor, it healed the broken-hearted, it preached deliverance to the captive, relief to the agony of the blind, setting at liberty to them that are bruised. "But by this labour he served the poor not less than the rich, for in distributing charity he called forth the kindly affection of those he relieved towards their benefactors; he gave them Christian views of the connexion which God has instituted between all human interests, and all human duties; and he inculcated the principles which secure fidelity in duty, even in the lowest and humblest paths of life." The institution has already accomplished great good. It could not fail to do so, for it is founded on the right principle—love towards man, *as man*, like that which was manifested in every movement and action of the life of the blessed Jesus. It recognised in every human being, a child of our Father who is in heaven, and did not so much thrust on him a benefit as solicit his brotherhood. No similar institution exists in any part of England we believe, except Liverpool, and there it is in its infancy, but in an infancy full of promise.

The greatest difficulty in the establishment of such an institution, is procuring men who will carry into the work of this ministry a deep feeling of respect for the actual rights and capacities of every individual mind he

meets. It may be asked what are the rights which belong to a condition of ignorance, and dependence, and degradation, and sin? And what is the respect which is due to him, who has no respect for himself? We reply, with Mr. Tuckerman, "that the capacities and rights of an immortal nature, of a being who must *account for himself* to God, and in whom the objects of the Gospel of Christ can only be effected by *his own free choice* of truth, and virtue, and duty, have the highest claims to respect, even in the most wayward and debased of our fellow-men."

It cannot be necessary to say more on the value and importance of such an institution: experience has proved its practicability; and a very brief visit to some of the most crowded haunts in this metropolis, and in the manufacturing districts, will suffice to prove its urgent necessity. How it may be best accommodated to the institutions existing in this country, or connected with them, we presume not to decide; but "where there is a will there is a way,"—let the spirit of proselytism be banished by the spirit of evangelism, and the religious instruction of the poor will no longer be a matter of difficulty.

Institutions for the relief of the aged, the infirm, and those afflicted by incurable diseases, though they do not so directly tend to the conservation of society as some of those which we have mentioned, must not be passed over without notice. It is a blessed thing that the blind, and the deaf and dumb, have been brought within the sphere of humanity, from which they had been excluded by their infirmities, and that the benevolence of science has enabled them to take their share

in the toils and responsibilities of human society. The moping idiot and the lunatic cannot perhaps be restored to intelligence, but they are preserved from injuring mankind in their paroxysms of disease, or afflicting humanity by the sad spectacle of their degradation. The recognition of the claim of the aged labourer to support, is a strong hold on the conduct of the able-bodied; for they will be reluctant to destroy the institutions of society, to the permanence of which they can alone look with hope under the pressure of unforeseen calamities. Benevolence may wisely extend its cares after death; it is wise that the obsequies of the poor should be performed with decency, and that their remains should rest in a spot to which feelings of reverence are attached. The outward signs that they have reached the spot "where the wicked cease from troubling, where the weary are at rest," though silent, read eloquent lessons to the living. There is a moral influence exerting a hallowed effect on the mind of the ignorant rustic, as he walks slowly and reverently over the ground where "the rude forefathers of his hamlet sleep." This is not superstition; it is a feeling implanted in our nature by the Author of our being, and like all the boons he has bestowed upon man, it can and does serve a holy and a useful purpose.

If we have rightly, even though feebly, examined the applications of benevolence, it must be obvious that these principles tend not merely to the conservation of society, but also to its extension and improvement. We must feel that every advancement in physical prosperity, renders a similar progress in intellectual and moral growth necessary to the continuance of social

happiness. The proportion between the varied elements of civilization must be preserved, and whenever the balance is deranged it must be skilfully re-adjusted: every element has its peculiar tendency to become exclusive and predominant; but its exclusiveness ends in falsehood, and its domination in tyranny. Perils beset the paths of nations as well as individuals, and no less require the constant exercise of prudence, of foresight, and of intelligence. Difficulties for which no experience has prepared us must be expected to arise, for new elements must be developed in the social system during its period of growth and progress—a period which must endure, so long as this world continues a place of probation and not of perfection.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

BEFORE dismissing a subject which has grown upon us as we advanced, it may not be uninteresting to cast a retrospective glance at the ground we have traversed, and trace an outline of the road by which we have reached our conclusions. It appeared of importance to establish the unity of the human race; not as a speculative belief, but as a practical doctrine, enforcing the moral feeling of universal brotherhood, and teaching *each* to feel an interest in all. If to say "I am a Roman," in the darkness of Paganism, was felt to be an appeal to the hearts of a nation, the simple phrase "I am a man," should, in our glorious sunshine, awaken all the sympathies of humanity. We appealed to physiology, not to prove the unity of the species, but to shew that it exhibited no evidence which, on examination, would be received as contradictory of the fact. Our direct evidence was derived from a higher and nobler source—from man's moral nature—from his capabilities of improvement—from his being "noble in reason, infinite in faculty; in form and moving express and admirable, in action like an angel, in apprehension like a god!"

We shewed how this distinctive attribute of man displayed itself most remarkably in the very circumstances which seem most to elevate the dignity of

instinct in the animal creation. While we admired the architecture of the bee and the beaver, we saw that there was no variety in their works—no improvement in their skill. The same ingenuity which the bee of our garden displays in the structure of its cell, was equally exhibited by the earliest of its progenitors that sipped sweets from the flowers of Paradise. On the other hand, we have but to look around, and the evidences of human progression are before us. It requires no extraordinary stretch of intellect to appreciate the distances that mind must have advanced, before it had come from the tent and the hovel to the palace and the cathedral.

Having shewn that a capacity for improvement was the essential characteristic of man; we then, from all the analogies which the universe affords, inferred that the natural state or condition of man must be that in which there are means and opportunities for the development of his improvable capacity. An extended examination of humanity in the savage and barbarous forms of life, convinced us that such a state, so far from developing and improving his intellectual and moral powers, blighted and destroyed both; consequently we concluded that Society was the natural condition for which man, both by his physical conformation and his moral endowments, was predestined and predetermined. A being so moulded, formed, and gifted, would be as unnaturally posited in a desert or a forest, as an oyster on a mountain or a gazelle in the sea. When so placed, he degenerates, dwindles, and declines; like exotic plants in our gardens, or foreign beasts in our menageries.

Having shewn, in this sense, the truth of the celebrated aphorism—that "Society existed before the individual," we proceeded to establish the improbability, or rather the utter impossibility, of society having been constituted or framed by an individual or individuals. Such a theory involved the obvious contradiction that man had a knowledge of the benefits of society antecedent to all experience, because antecedent to the very existence of society. Since, then, a certain stock of knowledge, a certain amount of civilization, was as necessary to be provided for man in the outset, as food is for the insect when it breaks the egg in its proper nidus, and as man could not have derived this stock from his internal resources, we proceeded to search for that external cause which enabled humanity to employ its own treasures, use its own talents, and complete the development of its own faculties. We had not far to seek: we found that in the intellectual and moral, not less than in the physical and material world, "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth;" and that Civilization like every other "good and perfect gift," originally came down from "the Father of Lights, in whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning."

Then—*but not till then*—we examined how far the conclusions to which we had been led, by reasoning and analysis, were in accordance with the narrative of the early history of our race contained in the Holy Scriptures. We found reason and revelation in complete accordance; they perfectly harmonized together, and thus enforced conviction that both were derived from the same God. This was a matter too interesting to ourselves individually—too important to the world

generally—to be lightly dismissed. We therefore scrutinized the Sacred Records; taking care that the spirit of reverence should control, but not check, the spirit of criticism: and we proved, by experience, that the spirit of criticism thus directed, gave new life and strength to the spirit of reverence.

It was impossible to go over this wide field of investigation without becoming momentarily more convinced of the important truth, that every increase in national prosperity, wealth, or intelligence, is accompanied by a corresponding increase of national responsibilities, and by an equal increase of national dangers, when the duties to God and man which these responsibilities involve, are neglected or forgotten. The apostolic warning appeared not less applicable to nations than to individuals—"Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." It appeared desirable to examine this truth by the test of experience; we have, therefore, compared it with the varied lights of history, and we have found that destiny never proved false to a nation, until the nation itself had proved false to its destiny. We saw everywhere that with nations, as with individuals, every deviation from the path of rectitude was a step on the road to ruin; every element of civilization perverted and misapplied, was changed into a potent means of destruction; and when once the process of corruption was begun, it proceeded, if unchecked, with an accelerated velocity, until iniquity consummated its work, and wrote its irrevocable *Ichabod* on mouldering fanes and ruined palaces.

It appeared from our researches, that injustice was equally fatal to a state, whether it was directed against

a class of its own citizens, against colonists or tributaries, or foreign nations. As the things which were "written aforetime, were written for our learning," we have endeavoured to read and interpret the lesson—to gather from the past some guide and direction for the future. We have observed, that new elements, or at least new forms of civilization, are frequently developed around us; and we have seen that every such novelty must, in a greater or less degree, derange and disorganize the social machinery which was constructed for the state of society established before it came into existence. From this obvious tendency in society to outgrow its institutions, we inferred the necessity of governmental care, legislative vigilance, and the constant exercise of, what for want of a better word, we may call statesmanship. What would be thought of the mariner who, having got his vessel out to sea and turned her head in the right direction, should then bind fast the tiller-ropes and leave her to steer the rest of her course herself, careless of all the changes of tide and wind? It further appeared, that in many cases incident to society, neglect or delay is not less dangerous than prepense malice: there are occasions in which the country waits for the minister, and the minister waits for the country—but time waits for neither of them, and before they have settled how the good seed is to be sown, the ground is impregnated with the germs of a plentiful crop of weeds.

A very common error amongst those most anxious to promote the welfare of our common race, appeared in the course of our researches to be, the sacrifice of a practical and attainable good for the sake of some

theoretical perfection, some speculative nostrum, which its inventors believe will cure all the evils of humanity—past, present, and to come. History has given us many proofs, that while people were disputing about what was the *Summum Bonum* in theory, the *Summum Malum* prevailed in practice. Such a course was so ludicrously exemplified by a child some nights ago, that we may be pardoned for relating the anecdote. A boy, about three years old, noticed the moon probably for the first time, and jumped to the conclusion that it was a golden cake; he made it at once his *summum bonum;* he cried, and shouted and roared for his unattainable golden cake, and all the arts of coaxing and entreaty were used to pacify him in vain; confectioneries, in every variety, were offered and rejected with scorn; the urchin would have his golden cake, and he would have nothing else. The end was, that he went to bed crying and supperless. There are many people who pass for wise in this world, who do not act one whit more sensibly with their theories than the boy with his golden cake.

A few practical suggestions, which naturally presented themselves in the course of our investigations, have been offered for general consideration, not merely in a spirit of humility, but with shrinking timidity. At a time when the mind of the country is unfortunately partisan, every change, however slight, is more likely to be viewed in its political bearings than in its relation to the general welfare, and at such a time every assertion of neutrality affords fresh aliment for suspicion. It is equally our duty, neither to court nor to shrink from danger: we have not withheld what we deemed fair and legitimate deductions, but we have laboured

not to urge our conclusions offensively on those who entertain contrary opinions, trusting that the charity of forbearance may be granted even when that of forgiveness is withheld.

Such is a summary outline of the routes we have traversed; and the author approaches the conclusion of his task with feelings of regret, in which he cannot hope that the reader will participate. The theme itself, the investigations to which it led, and the researches which it demanded, afforded pleasures that far outweighed the expenditure of time and toil. But greater and purer delight was derived from the correspondence which some of the inquiries instituted rendered necessary. The assistance thus obtained has been acknowledged in the preface; but its value in another point of view can be very imperfectly described, and still more imperfectly appreciated. The readiness with which aid was afforded by persons of every sect, creed, and party, proves, that amid all our differences there is a unity of benevolence, and of Christian philanthopy in the hearts of all; there is an undying well-spring of love in British bosoms, which, though overborne for a time by the bitter streams of hatred, will yet attain the mastery, even as those fountains which sometimes gush over a mineral vein, finally wear down their way to the primitive rock, and exchange then their turbid streams for limpid purity.

It is a lesson to those who wish to benefit their country, but shrink timorously from the task, to know that in every one of their honourable exertions they are sure to find sympathizing associates. Every one who undertakes the task will be astonished to find how vast

are the unworked mines of goodness which exist in human nature. It may almost be said, that we only hate those whom we do not know. Could hostile parties see the secrets of each other's souls, their mutual rage would soon be exchanged for mutual respect and mutual estimation. Misanthropists have averred, that the "window in the breast" would set the world by the ears; but every day's experience proves, that the more men know of each other, the more they are disposed to live in peace, unity, and concord.

The author has said that he sends these volumes to the world with some lurking sensations of fear, not so much for himself as for the principles he has endeavoured to establish, lest they should be injured by feeble advocacy: let him add, however, that this fear does not check the aspirations of hope; he feels strong confidence, that every thing which directs public attention to the existing conditions of society, has an immediate tendency to suggest the correction of social evil, and the advancement of social good. Impressed with this belief, he joins from his heart in the wish and anticipation of Hope's own bard,—

> Come, bright Improvement! on the car of Time,
> And rule the spacious world from clime to clime;
> Thy handmaid arts shall every wild explore,
> Trace every wave, and culture every shore.

FINIS.

LONDON:
Printed by Manning and Mason, Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row.

00027564

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 16 January, 2016